

GUIDELINES FOR A U.S. COUNTERPROPAGANDA STRATEGY TO
DEFEAT AL-QAEDA RECRUITING

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APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.



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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the counterpropaganda strategy to defeat al-Qaeda recruiting and suggests new strategy guidelines based on an analysis of historical case studies. The author evaluates the counterpropaganda campaigns during WWI, WWII, and the Cold War in terms of ideology and purpose, context, target audiences, organization, media techniques, and effects and evaluation. The conclusion is five guidelines distilled from the case studies for a new counterpropaganda strategy. There are fundamental problems with the current US approach to al-Qaeda counterpropaganda strategy. Two related problems are the current organizational structure and policy for counterpropaganda. The US must adopt a counterpropaganda strategy that disaggregates al-Qaeda organizations and focuses on regional audiences susceptible to al-Qaeda influences. Furthermore, the US needs to adopt a cognitive approach to counterpropaganda. This approach must be inherently non-military focused and authentic, based on the truth, to maintain credibility with diverse audiences. Defeating al-Qaeda propaganda requires an organization representative of the information Instrument of Power, not the military, to establish a unified policy for counterpropaganda that focuses on regional audiences. This long term strategy will focus on the cognitive sphere, not destroying infrastructure and shutting down websites, to influence regional audiences using authentic information based on the truth.

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INTRODUCTION

However, despite all of this, I say to you: that we are in a battle and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma.

–Ayman al-Zawahiri
al-Qaeda Lieutenant

This is not a global war against a tactic—terrorism or a religion—Islam. We are at war with a specific network, al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates.

–Barack H. Obama

The United States (US) requires guidelines to formulate a strategy to defeat al-Qaeda's ability to recruit, spread propaganda, and influence via the Internet. This work illustrates the elevated role of information within al-Qaeda's propaganda campaign and suggests the need for a new US counterpropaganda strategy. The US has faced adversary propaganda in the past. Perhaps those experiences with countering enemy propaganda will inform the future. The central question is: *Why has US strategy failed to defeat al-Qaeda's propaganda?*

Background and Significance

The US now approaches a decade of war against al-Qaeda. Initially fought in the mountains of Afghanistan, this war diverted to the streets of Baghdad and eventually back to the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The core of al-Qaeda's organization, or al-Qaeda central,

comprises an estimated 100 members isolated in Pakistan.¹ The character of this war, once defined by military engagements with al-Qaeda central in Afghanistan, now reflect distributed operations by al-Qaeda franchise organizations outside of the Middle East.² The al-Qaeda organization franchised into Somalia, Yemen, Indonesia, and North Africa using Internet media to promote a new globally dispersed and autonomous jihad.

Al-Qaeda central represents the core leadership of al-Qaeda isolated in the Afghanistan and Pakistan border region including the late Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.³ Al-Qaeda central also represents the Takfiri movement, an extreme form of Salafism that condones violence and terrorism, rejecting any political authority not representing Sharia law. Takfiris use violence, often indiscriminately, against fellow Muslims and non-combatants to achieve their objectives.⁴ The al-Qaeda franchise represents the distributed organizations, cells, networks, and individuals that operate globally and independently from al-Qaeda central.⁵

The Internet enables influencing and recruiting operations fundamental to al-Qaeda's global jihad.⁶ In fact, al-Qaeda uses a highly sophisticated strategy leveraging a professional media production entity, as-Sahab, to support websites that spread propaganda to radicalize the

¹ Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda. 25 Jan 2010. <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/empire/2009/10/2009102672443612162.html>; last accessed: 25 Jan 2011.

² Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda. 25 Jan 2010. .

³ National Military Strategy (NMS), 5.

⁴ Kilcullen, David. *The Accidental Guerrilla*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, 12-13.

⁵ Lachow, Irving. "Cyber Terrorism: Menace or Myth?" In *Cyberpower and National Security*. Edited by Franklin D. Kramer, Stuart H. Starr, and Larry K. Wentz. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, (2009), 454.

⁶ "The Internet at the Service of Jihad Organizations." International Institute for Counter-Terrorism Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group, June 2009. <http://www.ict.org.il/ResearchPublications/JihadiWebsitesMonitoring/JWMGInsights/tabid/320/Articlsid/723/currentpage/3/Default.aspx>; last accessed: 9 Mar 2011.

Weimann, Gabriel. "www.terror.net: How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet." United States Institute of Peace Special Report 116, March 2004. <http://www.usip.org/publications/wwwterrornet-how-modern-terrorism-uses-internet>; last accessed: 9 Mar 2011.

next generation of militants.⁷ One key shift in al-Qaeda's grand strategy leverages the Internet to recruit and motivate regional terrorist groups not affiliated with al-Qaeda to adopt the al-Qaeda brand in global jihad. The disparate groups who claim affiliation with the al-Qaeda brand give the appearance of a unified effort and globally distributed operations.

The US does not have a comprehensive strategy for defeating the al-Qaeda franchise organizations or their use of the Internet.⁸ The US information strategy to defeat al-Qaeda remains subordinate to military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. This strategy represents disjointed efforts from multiple organizations working in parallel, or worse, in opposition to one another.⁹ Executing the US strategy reveals confusing responsibilities and competing tasks that overlap multiple entities.¹⁰ Defeating al-Qaeda's propaganda crosses domains of information operations (IO), strategic communications (SC), public affairs (PA), and computer network operations conducted under United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) in addition to other complexities, including the globalization of this problem beyond the Middle East.

This study will address the following five questions:

- How is al-Qaeda using the Internet for propaganda, recruiting, and influence?
- What are the implications of the new al-Qaeda strategy to the US?

⁷ Kimmage, Daniel. "Al-Qaeda Central and the Internet." Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Paper. March 2010. http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/kimmage2_0.pdf (last accessed 28 January 2011), 2.

⁸ Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda. 25 Jan 2010.

⁹ Foer, Franklin. "Flacks Americana." *The New Republic*. May 20, 2002.

<http://www.tnr.com/print/article/politics/flacks-americana> last accessed 23 Jan 2011.

Waller, J. Michael. "Getting Serious About Strategic Influence: How to Move Beyond the State Department's Legacy of Failure." *Journal of International Security Affairs*, Fall 2009. Center for Security Policy Occasional Paper. One objective of the short-lived Office of Strategic influence (OSI) was to reverse negative perceptions of the US and its goals throughout the world, beyond the Islamic world. OSI operated in parallel to efforts led by Torie Clark, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, yet interagency feuding and misunderstandings led to actions deliberately undermining OSI and resulting in its closure.

¹⁰ Garfield, Andrew. "The US Counter-propaganda Failure in Iraq." *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2007, pp.23-32. <http://www.meforum.org/1753/the-us-counter-propaganda-failure-in-iraq> ; last accessed: 23 Jan 2011.

- What are the weaknesses of the current US counterpropaganda strategy?
- How did the US defeat adversary propaganda during WWI, WWII, and the Cold War?
- What are the key guidelines of past US propaganda campaigns that apply to current US counterpropaganda strategy?

Limitations of the Study

Al-Qaeda exploits the Internet for many military advantages from mission planning coordination to financial transactions.¹¹ This study limits its focus to al-Qaeda's use of the Internet as a tool for propaganda, influence, mass media manipulation, and recruitment of militant extremists. Furthermore, this study really focuses on the *guidelines* for a US strategy to defeat al-Qaeda's influence and propaganda using the Internet. The comprehensive strategy, suggested tactics, or courses of action remain beyond the scope of this research.

Assumptions

These assumptions provide suppositions about the current situation and the course of future events, assumed true in the absence of facts. The first assumption concerns the perceived threat of al-Qaeda franchise organizations continued use of the Internet for recruiting follow-on generations of extremist militants to al-Qaeda.¹² This study assumes al-Qaeda franchise organizations threaten the national security of the US. Second, the al-Qaeda franchise organizations threaten the US

¹¹ Weimann, Gabriel.

¹² National Security Strategy (NSS), May 2010, 19-20.
National Military Strategy (NMS), Feb 2011, 4-6.

and warrant a holistic strategy to defeat them.¹³ Third, al-Qaeda franchise organizations reflect decentralized, quasi-autonomous, and regionally organized entities as opposed to al-Qaeda central.¹⁴ Fourth, the US will pursue counter-terrorism policies, to include countering al-Qaeda franchise organizations, after the de-escalation in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁵ Fifth, protecting civil liberties remains paramount to any US strategy to defeat al-Qaeda's influence.¹⁶ Finally, this study assumes that the criteria for a holistic US strategy have implications at many levels of strategy to include all instruments of national power, but not limited to military power or military strategy.

Evidentiary Base

Interviews, transcripts, speeches, congressional testimony, the National Security Strategy, and the National Military Strategy represent the primary sources for this study. Secondary sources include books, scholarly journals, professional papers and theses, blogs, and online news articles. RAND studies and Congressional Research studies provided supporting evidence for this work.

Terminology and Definitions

In a war of ideas, words transform into an offensive and defensive arsenal, where the effects are based on the interpretations and resulting behaviors of the adversary. Devising a successful strategy rests on understanding a common lexicon, providing cohesion to disparate groups and organizations pursuing the same goals.¹⁷ Where applicable, the

¹³ Kimmage, Daniel, 16.

¹⁴ Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda. 25 Jan 2010.

¹⁵ National Military Strategy (NMS), 4-6.

¹⁶ Stone, Geoffrey R. *War and Liberty: An American Dilemma: 1790 to the Present*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., (2007), 165.

National Security Strategy (NSS), 36-37.

¹⁷ Hanson, Elizabeth C. *The Information Revolution and World Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., (2008), 100.

definitions used here come from Joint Publication 1-02, *The Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*.¹⁸

The word *propaganda* suggests a sinister form of persuasion and lies.¹⁹ The mere association of al-Qaeda's influence and communications strategy with *propaganda* has a negative connotation. The Webster's Dictionary omits the negative connotations and defines propaganda as "the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, cause, or a person. Ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause."²⁰ The important nuance with the term propaganda delineates between truths and lies. Some definitions of propaganda, such as JP 1-02 treat the information as misleading.

The US disassociates itself with propaganda terminology because of the negative perceptions. This circumstance complicates the development of a propaganda or counterpropaganda strategy. When the US influences others (based on truth), the terms *information operations*, *strategic communication*, *public diplomacy*, *public affairs*, and even *psychological operations* apply to those influence operations. Television commercials are a form of propaganda as advertising. Any strategy to defeat al-Qaeda's ability to recruit, motivate, and influence will rely on propaganda or counterpropaganda operations.

Propaganda — Any form of adversary communication, especially of a biased or misleading nature, designed to influence the opinions,

¹⁸ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02. *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010, (amended 31 December 2010).

¹⁹ Lord, Carnes. *Losing Hearts and Minds? Public Diplomacy and Strategic Influence in the Age of Terror*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, (2006), 33-34.

Taylor, Philip M. *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day*. Third Edition. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, (2003), 1-15. Although Lord's interpretation is a common one, the late Philip Taylor, a recognized expert in propaganda, points out that effective propaganda is based on truth, but spun in a way to cast the truth in an unfavorable light to the enemy.

²⁰ Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11th Ed., 996.

emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly. (JP 3-13.2)²¹

Information operations (IO) encompass the military's catchall umbrella for influencing, disrupting, or corrupting adversary information and information systems. IO includes diverse capabilities from cyberspace operations to coordinating and supporting public affairs. The majority of current IO campaigns are regionally focused military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda franchise operations outside of the military battlespace elude primary focus, since their effects lack integration into the immediate military campaign's operational design. The Air Force Glossary includes psychological operations as a core capability of information operations.²²

Information operations — The integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, military information support operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.²³

The Department of State conducts public diplomacy to influence foreign audiences and to promote US foreign policy objectives.²⁴ Public diplomacy qualifies as a socially acceptable term for propaganda and shares much of the functionality, objectives, and end states of historical US counterpropaganda campaigns. Public diplomacy shapes international perceptions by providing information to foreign audiences through media such as Voice of America radio. One important aspect of

²¹ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02., 295.

²² Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-2. *Air Force Glossary*. 11 January 2007, 60.

²³ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02., 175.

²⁴ US Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 1 – Organization and Functions: 1 FAM 350 Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP), 8 September 2008, 1, 6.

public diplomacy is that the intended audience is strictly foreign and not domestic.²⁵

Public diplomacy — 1. Those overt international public information activities of the United States Government designed to promote United States foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers, and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad. 2. In peace building, civilian agency efforts to promote an understanding of the reconstruction efforts, rule of law, and civic responsibility through public affairs and international public diplomacy operations. Its objective is to promote and sustain consent for peace building both within the host nation and externally in the region and in the larger international community.²⁶

The military maintains a consistent message with the media through Public Affairs (PA). Public Affairs interacts with domestic audiences through the media by releasing public information. The critical role of PA keeps domestic audiences informed of military activities and operations. Additionally, PA releases support and complement IO, psychological operations, and public diplomacy efforts to maintain consistency and unity of effort. PA represents the military conduit to foreign media, provides information on military activities and responds to foreign media reporting of questionable accuracy.

Public affairs — those public information, command information, and community engagement activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense.²⁷

Public information — Within public affairs, that information of a military nature, the dissemination of which is consistent with security and approved for release.²⁸

Command information — Communication by a military organization directed to the internal audience that creates an awareness of the

²⁵ The Smith Mundt Act of 1948 restricts propaganda to foreign audiences, originally to prevent government competition with domestic commercial radio, but still prohibits government broadcasting that is intended for foreign audiences to be accessible to domestic audiences.

²⁶ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02., 297.

²⁷ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02., 297.

²⁸ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02., 297.

organization's goals, informs them of significant developments affecting them and the organization, increases their effectiveness as ambassadors of the organization, and keeps them informed about what is going on in the organization.²⁹

Strategic communication (SC) provides the overarching effort for consistent and coordinated message to the world and includes public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations.³⁰ Strategic communication, like public diplomacy, accomplishes propaganda aims without the associated negative connotations. Additionally, SC coordinates collective departmental activity as opposed to the singular departmental nature of PA, IO, or public diplomacy.

Strategic communication — Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.³¹

Terrorism is a tactic. Declaring a War on Terrorism makes formulating a strategy quite difficult because it elevates the terrorist act from an individual criminal level to a state level. Terrorism labels cause confusion within the collective strategy to negate al-Qaeda's ability to influence and recruit.

Terrorism — The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies. Terrorism is often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs and committed in the pursuit of goals that are usually political. (JP 3-07.2)³²

²⁹ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02., 73.

³⁰ National Security Strategy (NSS), 16.

³¹ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02., 354.

³² Joint Publication (JP) 1-02., 374.

The term *counterpropaganda* defined below in Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-02, the Air Force Glossary, references the definition in an older version of JP 1-02; however, the current version of JP 1-02 deleted this term. If the US removes counterpropaganda terminology from the military lexicon, what term describes the strategy to defeat enemy propaganda?

Counterpropaganda operations -- Those psychological operations activities that identify adversary propaganda, contribute to situational awareness, and serve to expose adversary attempts to influence friendly populations and military forces. (JP 1-02) [Activities to identify and counter adversary propaganda and expose adversary attempts to influence friendly populations and military forces situational understanding.] (AFDD 2-5) {Words in brackets apply only to the Air Force and are offered for clarity.}³³

Methodology

This study combines two primary methods to determine the guidelines for a US strategy to defeat al-Qaeda's propaganda influence. First, defining the problem is the culmination of the author's nine years of tactical and operational planning experiences and several military exercises. Insight into the problem and a possible counterstrategy developed as the result of interviews and discussions at the United States Air Force Weapons School, Air Command and Staff College, and the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies. Second, historical case studies led to the discovery of past approaches to this problem. Only US case studies were evaluated to maintain consistency of comparison. The case studies include US propaganda strategy during WWI, WWII, and the Cold War. Each case study presents a framework in which to compare the current strategy to defeat al-Qaeda's propaganda and offers an

³³ Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-02., 53.

opportunity to understand best practices and strategies to distill the guidelines for a new US counterpropaganda strategy.

Analytical Criteria

The analytical criteria for the case studies establishes consistency and first, uses ideology, purpose, context, and target audience.³⁴ Second, organizational structure illustrates and compares differences and similarities across specific historical US military propaganda campaigns.³⁵ Third, media techniques establish the propaganda methods and uses of technology for comparison.³⁶ Finally, the effects and evaluation determine if the propaganda was successful in historical context.³⁷ The criteria frame the propaganda case studies from WWI, WWII, and the Cold War and provide a template for comparison to the current situation.

Overview

Chapter 1 summarizes the current situation with respect to the strategy to defeat al-Qaeda's propaganda influence using current examples and highlighting the limitations of the strategy. Additionally, this chapter answers three important questions in this study. First, how does al-Qaeda use the Internet to spread propaganda? Second, what does the new al-Qaeda strategy, characterized by the distributed al-Qaeda franchise networks, imply for the US? Finally, what weaknesses plague the current US counterpropaganda strategy? An overview of the guidance, organizations involved, and current strategy complete this chapter.

³⁴ Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., (1986), 154-169.

³⁵ Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, 154-169.

³⁶ Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, 154-169.

³⁷ Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, 154-169.

Chapter 2 focuses attention on the historical case studies of US counterpropaganda during WWI, WWII, and the Cold War. This chapter answers the question, “How did the US defeat adversary propaganda during WWI, WWII, and the Cold War?” This chapter also evaluates the campaigns individually to assess the counterpropaganda ideology, purpose, context, and target audience. Additionally, the organizational structure, media techniques, and effects of the counterpropaganda campaigns provide understanding and reveal the best practices for consideration as modern strategy guidelines.

Chapter 3 presents five guidelines distilled from historical US strategies and practices. First, an organization that represents the information instrument of power (IoP) provides leadership for the counterpropaganda strategy. Second, a unified policy consolidates the disparate counterpropaganda planning into a singular unity of effort. Third, disaggregating the enemy and target audiences to mitigate local contextual factors and fracture the unified perception of the al-Qaeda (AQ) organization. Fourth, a cognitive approach is necessary to influence behavior and change the thinking of the populations susceptible to AQ recruiting and motivation. Finally, the strategy must employ authentic and truthful information. This chapter answers the question, “What key guidelines of past US counterpropaganda campaigns apply to the current al-Qaeda strategy?”

Chapter 4 applies each of the five guidelines to the current situation and evaluates their validity. The guidelines for counterpropaganda strategy represent the *ways* in the strategy framework of ends, ways, and means. This chapter evaluates the implications of the guidelines and how they address the problem of al-

Qaeda franchise propaganda and how the guidelines change the current strategy if implemented.

Chapter 5 details the conclusion and final thoughts. This chapter includes a brief synopsis of the current situation and analytical findings addressing the central question of this study. This chapter addresses the central question of this study; “What does this study imply for a new counterpropaganda strategy to defeat al-Qaeda franchise propaganda and their ability to recruit and influence violent extremists?”



Chapter 1

Current Situation

Therefore, determine the enemy's plans and you will know which strategy will be successful and which will not.

--Sun Tzu

The guidance in the National Security Strategy (NSS) states the US will wage a global campaign to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates. The strategy requires a broad, sustained, and integrated campaign using every tool of American power.¹ However, the situation continues to evolve and al-Qaeda has adopted a new strategy for global jihad. The NSS portrays al-Qaeda's core in Pakistan as the most dangerous component, but recognizes the growing threat from al-Qaeda's allies worldwide.² A detailed characterization of the threat using Anwar al-Awlaki and as-Sahab media as examples will frame the problem in terms of the changing situation. This chapter answers three questions to encapsulate the current situation. First, how does al-Qaeda use the Internet to spread propaganda to motivate, influence, and recruit militant extremists? Second, how does al-Qaeda's franchised organizational scheme threaten the current US strategy? Finally, what weaknesses plague the current US strategy?

¹ National Security Strategy (NSS), May 2010, 19.

² National Security Strategy (NSS), May 2010, 20.

The Threat

Anwar al-Awlaki, the US-born radical cleric of Yemeni descent, exemplifies the al-Qaeda franchise threat.³ Awlaki, regarded as an al-Qaeda media strategist, uses very sophisticated methods to attract American 'homegrown' recruits.⁴ Awlaki, characterized "like your favorite professor...soft spoken and gently persuasive like Osama bin Laden. Tens of thousands, maybe millions have watched his lectures on the Internet."⁵ Awlaki claims to have founded the al-Qaeda franchise organization in Yemen and takes credit for motivating and radicalizing Maj. Nidal Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, and Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmatallab, known as the Christmas Day Bomber.⁶ Anwar al-Awlaki's expertise at motivating a young generation of Muslims to extremism through the Internet has given al-Qaeda amazing operational reach. "Al-Qaeda and its affiliates don't have to go in search of recruits anymore – the recruits, inspired by Awlaki, find them."⁷ The influence of propagandists like Awlaki have increased the number of jihadists that do not fit any particular ethnic, economic, educational, or social profile making root cause assessments more complex.⁸ Anwar al-Awlaki represents a key success for al-Qaeda franchise's ability to use propaganda to assert its influence. The US focus and weight of effort in strategic communication involve efforts primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan or areas that affect operations in those two regions.⁹ Al-Qaeda franchise

³ Temple-Raston, Dina, "Two Americans Become al-Qaeda Media Strategists." National Public Radio (NPR) 14 October 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130543554> (last accessed 27 October 2010).

⁴ Temple-Raston, Dina.

⁵ Temple-Raston, Dina, Mia Bloom, a terrorism expert at Penn State, made comments.

⁶ Temple-Raston, Dina, Awlaki earned a bachelor's and master's degree in engineering and was working on his Ph.D. He was an Imam in Virginia and San Diego prior to moving to Britain before 11 Sep 2001. Awlaki was a phenomenon in the UK as a non-radicalized Imam, until he was imprisoned in Yemen in 2004.

⁷ Temple-Raston, Dina.

⁸ Bergen, Peter and Bruce Hoffman. "Assessing the Terrorist Threat: A Report of the Bipartisan Policy Center's National Security Preparedness Group." (10 September 2010), 15.

⁹ National Military Strategy (NMS), 5-7.

successes in Somalia, Yemen, and Algeria, illustrate marginal or non-existent efforts in SC in those geographic areas.¹⁰

As-Sahab media represents al-Qaeda's propaganda arm linked primarily to Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri as a professional production organization for producing audio and video recordings for global media.¹¹ In 2007, as-Sahab released nearly 100 propaganda tapes for al-Qaeda.¹² This organization's responsibility includes the propaganda videos published on al-Qaeda affiliated websites and rebroadcast on major news networks.¹³ These videos most effectively distribute al-Qaeda propaganda on the Internet.¹⁴ Although, as-Sahab represents the most visible media outlet for al-Qaeda, it accounts for only a small portion of the jihadist media production used for motivation, influence, and recruiting.¹⁵

The media effort demonstrates a deliberate, professional, and globally accessible campaign.¹⁶ As-Sahab exemplifies close associations with al-Qaeda central propaganda.¹⁷ The current technology and Internet access makes every al-Qaeda jihadist a propagandist too.¹⁸ The al-Qaeda franchise commonly uses YouTube-style media. Capturing the terrorist act on video for distribution for motivation and recruiting, renders the act itself as effective as propaganda.¹⁹

¹⁰ Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda. 25 Jan 2010.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/empire/2009/10/2009102672443612162.html>; last accessed: 25 Jan 2011.

¹¹ Bergen, Peter and Bruce Hoffman, 20.

¹² Bergen, Peter and Bruce Hoffman, 20.

¹³ Kaplan, Eben. "Terrorists and the Internet." Council on Foreign Relations, 8 January 2009.

http://www.cfr.org/publication/10005/terrorists_and_the_internet.html (last accessed 27 October 2010).

¹⁴ Kaplan, Eben.

¹⁵ Kaplan, Eben.

¹⁶ Kuehl, Daniel T., "From Cyberspace to Cyberpower: Defining the Problem." Chapter 2 from *Cyberpower and National Security*. Edited by Franklin D. Kramer, Stuart H. Starr, and Larry K. Wentz. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, (2009), 39.

¹⁷ Bergen, Peter and Bruce Hoffman, 20.

¹⁸ Kuehl, Daniel T., "From Cyberspace to Cyberpower: Defining the Problem." Chapter 2 from *Cyberpower and National Security*, 29.

¹⁹ Dauber, Cori E., "YouTube War: Fighting in a World of Cameras in Every Cell Phone and Photoshop on Every Computer." Strategic Studies Institute, November 2009.

Al-Qaeda Propaganda Strategy

Dissecting al-Qaeda's propaganda strategy into ideology, purpose, context, and target audience will assist in answering the first question. How does al-Qaeda use the Internet to spread propaganda to motivate, influence, and recruit militant extremists? Additionally, al-Qaeda's propaganda organization, media techniques, effects, and evaluation will provide the framework for understanding the strategy.²⁰

Ideology and Purpose. Al-Qaeda's ideology embodies global jihadi terrorism.²¹ This description denotes simplicity despite the ideology's complexity. Al-Qaeda's organizational composition, including membership, mirrors the complexity of the ideology. Franchise organizations adopt the al-Qaeda brand to further their regional interests. The overarching ideology of global jihad unites the disparate groups despite their nuanced differences. Some experts caution the western tendency to believe a single al-Qaeda ideology exists arguing the considerable disagreement among the terrorist themselves about ideology, doctrine, and tactics.²² Osama bin Laden issued the *Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places* in 1996 and provided the foundation for al-Qaeda's ideology of global jihadi terrorism that persists today.²³

Al-Qaeda's propaganda strategy accomplishes two main objectives. The first objective portends to motivate, influence, and

²⁰ Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., (1986), 154-169.

²¹ Osama bin Laden Fatwa 1996 and Fatwa 1998.
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html;
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1998.html; last accessed: 9 Mar 2011.

²² Sageman, Marc, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, 39.

²³ Sageman, Marc, 43.
Osama bin Laden Fatwa 1996 and Fatwa 1998.

inspire potential recruits and devout followers to jihad.²⁴ Al-Qaeda requires new Mujahidin to fight the holy war, lead, and globally self-organize to fight infidels.²⁵ The second objective indicates breaking the will of the west by sending messages, such as bin Laden's 9/11 anniversary messages. This struggle represents a long war and al-Qaeda reinforces that reality to the US, reminding of the cost in blood and treasure to continue the fight against al-Qaeda.

Context. The context of the propaganda campaign embodies the War against the Americans.²⁶ Al-Qaeda leverages multiple contextual factors for propaganda to motivate, influence, and recruit. First, al-Qaeda exploits the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the 11 September attacks on the US, and domestic political and economic issues to influence American public opinion. Second, al-Qaeda leverages tactical video footage to inspire the young generation of militants to jihad. The use of technology allows al-Qaeda's propaganda to transcend borders. In fact, al-Qaeda can operate their information war and propaganda from within the US or in any Internet café anywhere in the world from laptops and cellular phones.²⁷ Furthermore, the sensational stories in the media proliferates the successes of al-Qaeda giving publicity that only serves to fuel their cause.

Target Audience. The target audience for al-Qaeda's propaganda strategy has both internal and external components. Internally, the target audience is comprised of recruits who have not taken action against the infidels and who require inspiration or motivation to bring

²⁴ Osama bin Laden Fatwa 1996 and Fatwa 1998.

²⁵ Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*.

²⁶ Osama bin Laden Fatwa 1996 and Fatwa 1998.

²⁷ Lachow, Irving. "Cyber Terrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 455.

them to jihadi action.²⁸ Consider the videos, al-Qaeda contact information, target lists, calls for recruitment, and motivational messages as information for one influential al-Qaeda franchise member. That member will in turn use the material to recruit friends, discuss and debate over tea, cajole, inform mullahs and mufti. Internet propaganda ignites the social interaction mechanism as the catalyst for recruitment and motivation. Externally, al-Qaeda targets young recruits and disparate terrorist groups willing to adopt al-Qaeda brand. Additionally, al-Qaeda's propaganda aims to influence western thinking to abandon current policies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Further, al-Qaeda hopes to centralize negative thinking throughout the Middle East toward erosion of any support of Israel and to undermine US military basing.

Organization. Al-Qaeda's propaganda organization has two elements akin to the differences between al-Qaeda central and al-Qaeda franchise. The formal organization of the propaganda campaign contains as-Sahab media and their professional video production and distribution. As-Sahab acts as the interface between al-Qaeda core leadership like bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri and global media. As-Sahab routinely provides video and audio messages to al-Jazeera among other media outlets in addition to online distribution.²⁹ Al-Qaeda has decentralized the propaganda campaign to the tactical level as well. This decentralization denotes a key aspect of al-Qaeda franchise propaganda and recruiting. This campaign often labeled the "YouTube War" describes the ability to film, edit, and upload attacks onto the Internet within minutes of staging the event.³⁰

²⁸ Atran, Scott asserts this is not true. He argues there is no organization or recruiting cell per se as in an entity that could be targeted by the military.

²⁹ Kimmage, Daniel. "*Al-Qaeda Central and the Internet.*" Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Paper. March 2010.

http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/kimmage2_0.pdf (last accessed 28 January 2011), 3.

³⁰ Dauber.

Media Techniques. The media techniques offer similarities between al-Qaeda central and al-Qaeda franchise. Both entities use the Internet as their primary distribution medium for propaganda. The goal reaps maximum exposure and media coverage for propaganda value. Al-Qaeda central and as-Sahab use techniques that distribute to global audiences via global mainstream media. When Osama bin Laden made announcements to target 'western audiences,' he relied on as-Sahab to facilitate message distribution to major news outlets such as al-Jazeera, BBC, and western media. Posting such messages on YouTube will not reach the average westerner whose public opinion and actions can affect governmental change. Al-Qaeda franchise propaganda targets new recruits through sensationalized video and music attracting the younger generation audiences that frequent jihad websites and use social networking media such as YouTube.

Effects and Evaluation. The arguable effects and evaluation of both techniques depend on the perspective of comparison. Some experts suggest the effects of al-Qaeda central propaganda strategy exhibits weakness and the franchise organizations distribute the al-Qaeda brand.³¹ The splintering of the organization signals an inability to control operations by the core leadership. The smaller distributed groups that operate autonomously from al-Qaeda core leadership enable more propaganda by the deed. The al-Qaeda organization does not require masses of recruits to keep the movement viable in the future, in fact, consider that only 19 people conducted attacks on 11 September 2001.³²

³¹ Kimmage, 16.

³² Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda.

Implications for US Strategy

The US strategy to cope with al-Qaeda propaganda supports the notion that conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are military issues confined to the Middle East.³³ The US strategy predominantly focuses on al-Qaeda central.³⁴ Public diplomacy efforts by the Department of State exist in other regions of the world, but the weight of effort is clearly on al-Qaeda central.³⁵ The change in al-Qaeda's strategy to distributed franchise organizations has introduced several layers of complexity that have implications on the current military strategy, domestic issues, and organizational issues to name a few.³⁶

The adversary's propaganda strategy shift away from al-Qaeda central significantly complicates the military information operations to counter it.³⁷ Al-Qaeda core decreased their output of propaganda through as-Sahab due to their pseudo-containment in the mountains of Pakistan. The propaganda and messages released serve as a symbolic motivator to the franchise organizations.³⁸ The US counterpropaganda operations and strategic communications focus regionally, thus having a

³³ Hanson, Elizabeth C. *The Information Revolution and World Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., (2008), 113-116.

Technology, Policy, Law, and Ethics Regarding US Acquisition and Use of Cyberattack Capabilities. Edited by William A. Owens, Kenneth N. Dam, and Herbert S. Lin. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, (2009), 18.

³⁴ National Military Strategy (NMS), 4-6.

³⁵ National Security Strategy (NSS), 19-20.

³⁶ Kuehl, Daniel T., "From Cyberspace to Cyberpower: Defining the Problem." Chapter 2 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 39.

Starr, Stuart H., "Tactical Influence Operations." Chapter 15 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 368-369.

Lachow, Irving, "Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 454.

Libiki, Martin C. *Conquest in Cyberspace*. New York: Cambridge University Press, (2007), 46-48, 152, 259-260.

³⁷ *Technology, Policy, Law, and Ethics Regarding US Acquisition and Use of Cyberattack Capabilities*, 18.

³⁸ Kuehl, Daniel T., "From Cyberspace to Cyberpower: Defining the Problem." Chapter 2 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 39.

Starr, Stuart H., "Tactical Influence Operations." Chapter 15 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 368-369.

Lachow, Irving, "Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 455.

marginal impact on the franchise operations outside of that military area of responsibility.³⁹ For example, during the height of the Iraq insurgency, al-Qaeda Iraq (AQI) adeptly filmed and distributed propaganda videos to motivate local support for the insurgency.⁴⁰ The military information operations campaign focused on countering the ability of AQI to motivate and recruit extremists in Iraq as a larger campaign to promote security and stability in the area. The military information operations campaign does not extend into other hotspots in the region that may foster militant extremists in places like Somalia, Algeria, or Yemen because those areas are not within the geographic area of responsibility for the military, per se.⁴¹ Counterpropaganda strategies must have integrated effects with the current military situation.⁴² Counterpropaganda efforts beyond that military strategy lack priority consideration and detract from the concentration of forces and effects in the area of responsibility. At best, the counterpropaganda effects require secondary or tertiary operational priority. As the al-Qaeda franchise grows and expands their distributed operations, the ability to use the military instrument of power as the most comfortable instrument used to fight al-Qaeda diminishes because of the geographic dispersion.⁴³ Additionally, the threat posed by al-Qaeda franchise constitutes a constabulary issue outside of the Middle East and not a martial issue. An unstated US goal postures Iraq and Afghanistan central governments to police al-Qaeda and other violent extremist threats.⁴⁴

The next logical step in the Middle East initiates military redeployment and transitions to local security with a small area

³⁹ National Military Strategy (NMS), 4-6.

⁴⁰ Hanson, 116.

⁴¹ Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda.

⁴² National Military Strategy (NMS), 4-6.

⁴³ Lachow, Irving, "Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 455.

Libiki, 262.

⁴⁴ Colonel M.V. Smith, interview
National Security Strategy (NSS)

footprint.⁴⁵ This reduces the regional military capacity to combat al-Qaeda's propaganda and simultaneously, diminishes the opportunity for al-Qaeda to exploit the US military for propaganda material. Decreased access to US military personnel affects al-Qaeda's ability to conduct attacks and promote global jihad.⁴⁶

The shift in al-Qaeda's strategy nullifies the US military approach to adversary propaganda as a regional infrastructure and information problem set.⁴⁷ The approach to combating al-Qaeda's propaganda relies on the physical domain and the information itself.⁴⁸ The focus on the physical infrastructure militarily makes common sense. The military can attack a key infrastructure node and deny regional Internet, electricity, telephone lines, cellular communications, and other infrastructure services.⁴⁹ The means could leverage kinetic capability, using bombs and bullets, or non-kinetic like cyberattack to disrupt the physical domain or infrastructure. The focus on the information and content of the adversary represents the second military approach to countering al-Qaeda's propaganda. This approach can involve a multitude of tactics and techniques; however, military strategists manage information and content control at regional levels easier than at the global level. The al-Qaeda franchises' global shift complicates access to the planning and intelligence required to affect the adversary's information and content.⁵⁰ Al-Qaeda's new strategy deemphasizes al-Qaeda central operations and promotes distributed pseudo-networks and cells. Once a regional problem, the ability to operate autonomously from remote corners of the world gives new context to this problem. This problem requires a non-

⁴⁵ National Security Strategy (NSS) – transitioning military combat operations out of Iraq

⁴⁶ Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda.

⁴⁷ Hanson, 113.

⁴⁸ Lachow, Irving, "Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 459-460.

⁴⁹ Lachow, Irving, "Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 459-460.

⁵⁰ *Technology, Policy, Law, and Ethics Regarding US Acquisition and Use of Cyberattack Capabilities*, 35.

kinetic approach with less tangible and fewer kinetic military targets.⁵¹ The new character of the strategy spans organizational control, geographic borders, and modes of communication. The shift in al-Qaeda's strategy has organizational implications for the US.

Weaknesses of US Strategy

When the US attempted to approach this propaganda problem with creative strategies in the past; e.g., the Office of Strategic Influence, the program was unable to get off the ground. The repercussions may have lasting effects on a new strategy.⁵² The counterpropaganda strategy exemplifies military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, global mass media, and public diplomacy efforts in select countries. The Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) offered a completely different approach to influencing global audiences to defeat terrorism.⁵³ For example, one OSI initiative provided educational material resources and access to information in Pakistani schools to provide options for children to counteract the radicalization of students in the Madrasas.⁵⁴ This initiative provided opportunity, partnership, and investment in young people in Pakistan subjected to radical education.⁵⁵ OSI was not suggesting censorship of the media, lying to the press, shutting off power to Internet cafés, or kinetic attacks on fiber optic lines and cellular towers.⁵⁶ OSI pursued three foundational objectives: to interdict recruitment of young terrorists; to provide unfettered access to global information in denied or restricted areas; and to reverse negative

⁵¹ Lachow, Irving, "Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 461-464.

⁵² Hanson, 114-115.

⁵³ Hanson, 113.

⁵⁴ Interview via telephone with Brigadier General (ret.) Dr. Simon P. Worden, 26 Jan 2011.

⁵⁵ *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field*. Edited by Antonio Guistozi. New York: Columbia University Press, (2009), 92, 206, 253.

⁵⁶ Worden.

perceptions of the US around the world and not just in the Islamic world.⁵⁷ OSI would lead a coordinated long-term influence campaign.⁵⁸ Resistance to OSI's methodology and political subversion against the organization, are two contributing reasons why the US is struggling with a counterpropaganda strategy to defeat al-Qaeda franchise recruiting.⁵⁹ The enemy strategy has changed the context of this war. The new problem requires a non-military led solution.⁶⁰

The nature of the Internet and the proliferation of propaganda in global media introduce civil liberty issues into the US counterpropaganda strategy.⁶¹ The military strategy that targets physical infrastructure and information content directly opposes civil liberties.⁶² For example, employing measures to shut down a terrorist website to prevent the content proliferation on the Internet limits freedom of speech.⁶³ The Internet enables global interconnectivity with international audiences and provides al-Qaeda a suitable mechanism for propaganda.⁶⁴ The largely unregulated, arguably indefensible, and globally ubiquitous medium, adds a layer of complexity to the US counterstrategy.⁶⁵ Censoring the Internet, radio, news, or any mass media contradicts the very civil liberties the US fights to protect with an ineffective and impossible task of media censorship.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ Worden.

⁵⁸ Worden.

⁵⁹ Worden.

⁶⁰ *Technology, Policy, Law, and Ethics Regarding US Acquisition and Use of Cyberattack Capabilities*, 18.

⁶¹ *Technology, Policy, Law, and Ethics Regarding US Acquisition and Use of Cyberattack Capabilities*, 193.

⁶² Starr, Stuart H., "Tactical Influence Operations." Chapter 15 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 368-369.

⁶³ Libiki, 259-260.

⁶⁴ Kuehl, Daniel T., "From Cyberspace to Cyberpower: Defining the Problem." Chapter 2 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 29.

⁶⁵ Brate, Adam. *Technomanifestos: Visions from the Information Revolutionaries*. New York: Texere, LLC., (2002), 234.

Hanson, 118-119.

Libiki, 262.

⁶⁶ National Security Strategy (NSS)

Technology, Policy, Law, and Ethics Regarding US Acquisition and Use of Cyberattack Capabilities, 181, 193.

The problem resides in the cognitive domain of decision-making and perceptions.⁶⁷ The current construct in the “War on Terror” hinders the US strategy to a disadvantaged position. The current lexicon used to communicate the strategic message limits international progress. US strategy focuses disproportionately on the physical (infrastructural) level. For example, the military targets the means of al-Qaeda’s communication through terrorist websites, perhaps using cyberattack to deny Internet service. Alternatively, the military targets the content (informational) level, such as the propaganda message itself by discrediting or defacing the information on the website, again using cyberattack. This methodology represents the military strategies, use of cyber weapons, and Patriot Act designations of terrorist websites. After a decade of debacle, the focus should shift to content (information) and cognitive levels (decision-making and perceptions) to influence the cognitive level of the al-Qaeda franchise.⁶⁸ Engaging the adversary in non-kinetic and non-violent discourse may not eradicate terrorism worldwide, but it addresses al-Qaeda’s ability to propagandize, recruit, and motivate.⁶⁹

The current US strategy to defeat adversary propaganda cloaked itself amongst various disconcerted efforts in the “War on Terror.”⁷⁰ The military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, Department of State Public Diplomacy efforts in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, Strategic Communication efforts internationally and perhaps domestically (public

Starr, Stuart H., “Tactical Influence Operations.” Chapter 15 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 368-369, 371.

⁶⁷ Lachow, Irving, “Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?” Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 461-464.

⁶⁸ Lachow, Irving, “Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?” Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 459-464.

⁶⁹ Libiki, 95.

Technology, Policy, Law, and Ethics Regarding US Acquisition and Use of Cyberattack Capabilities, 18.

⁷⁰ Hanson, 113.

affairs). These efforts represent the strategy in part, albeit neither united, nor integrated.⁷¹

Conclusions / Summary

This chapter answered three key questions to contextualize the current situation. First, how does al-Qaeda use the Internet to spread propaganda? Anwar al-Awlaki exemplifies al-Qaeda franchise operations out of Yemen to recruit and motivate new Mujahidin. Anwar al-Awlaki uses the Internet as his global pulpit for extremist propaganda. Recruits seek out Awlaki to hear his extremely motivational messages.⁷² As-Sahab media provides propaganda for al-Qaeda central using a professional media strategy that deliberately influences global audiences through mass media such as al-Jazeera.⁷³ Al-Qaeda central and as-Sahab distribute propaganda to mass media and external audiences to break the will of the US. The messages constantly remind the US of the long war. Al-Qaeda franchise focuses on the internal audiences, the recruiting and motivating efforts, to extend the bases of distributed jihad networks. This propaganda effort characterizes the crux of the new al-Qaeda strategy.

The second question inquires about the implications of the new al-Qaeda franchise strategy. The major implication of the new al-Qaeda strategy reveals the US lack of counterstrategy for this threat.⁷⁴ The military led counterpropaganda campaign is regionally focused and affects Iraq and Afghanistan theaters of operation exclusively. Furthermore, this military effort determines how the regional effort will transition to police forces in Iraq and Afghanistan as a constabulary matter for the new governments and not how the al-Qaeda franchise has

⁷¹ *Technology, Policy, Law, and Ethics Regarding US Acquisition and Use of Cyberattack Capabilities*, 19.

⁷² Temple-Raston

⁷³ Kimmage, 3.

⁷⁴ Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda.

distributed their network. The Al-Qaeda franchise problem requires a new US strategy and fundamental changes to defeat their propaganda efforts.

The third question this chapter attempted to answer identifies the weaknesses of the current US strategy. The military relinquishes their role as the appropriate lead agency for this counterpropaganda effort. The momentum shift away from the military operations in the Middle East may prove catastrophic to the counterpropaganda strategy if it marginalizes combating al-Qaeda propaganda. Some experts argue that al-Qaeda franchise does not have the capacity to execute a 9/11 caliber attack on the US.⁷⁵ Others, including the retired Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Myers believes that the al-Qaeda franchise has the capacity to execute another 9/11, and stresses the inadequacy of the US strategy to defeat that threat.⁷⁶

Countering al-Qaeda propaganda warrants a new strategy with a non-military lead agency in transition and redeployment out of Iraq and Afghanistan. Who will take the organizational lead for this effort?

The US has faced enemy propaganda in WWI, WWII, and the Cold War as three examples of global propaganda campaigns. Each case study offers perspective and context to this problem faced by the US in the past century to guide a new strategy, where applicable, and offers lessons that need not be repeated.

⁷⁵ Kimmage, 3.

⁷⁶ Al Jazeera "The Long War: The US and al-Qaeda.

Chapter 2

Propaganda Case Studies

War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied.

--Sun Tzu

The US counterpropaganda campaigns during WWI, WWII, and the Cold War serve as three case studies that offer differing perspectives and insight into US approaches to defeating adversary influence campaigns. Each case study exposes the elements of the counterpropaganda campaign in terms of ideology and purpose, context, target audience, organization, media techniques, and effects and evaluation. These elements highlight the best practices that are applicable to modern counterpropaganda strategy.

World War I Counterpropaganda 1917 – 1918

Ideology and Purpose. President Woodrow Wilson delivered his war message on April 2, 1917 to describe the American war aims as “a war against all nations...the challenge is to all mankind. Our object now, as then, is to vindicate the principle of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power, and to set up amongst really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and action as will henceforth ensure the observance of those principles.”¹ The war aims speech laid the foundation for WWI propaganda ideology for the domestic and international audiences.

¹ Bruntz, George G., *Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, (1938), 31.

America lacked consensus in unity of purpose at the outset of WWI and required complete solidarity to survive as a nation.² No government could expect victory without a united nation behind it.³ The propaganda ideology that provided the solidarity for the American people stemmed from the uniting phrase, “Make the world safe for democracy.”⁴

The purpose of the WWI propaganda campaign was to unify opinion among the US citizenry and impair the unity of the adversary.⁵ Three lines of operation guided the propaganda campaign in WWI, the first consolidated domestic opinion as “Sell the War.”⁶ The second line of operation manipulated neutral or world opinion, and the third demoralized enemy opinion.⁷ The propaganda in WWI marshaled public opinion and built national solidarity through a revolution of American opinion and transformed the US from an anti-militaristic democracy to an organized war machine utilizing every man, woman, and child.⁸

Context. Ideas and public opinion remained critical to the war effort and became the driving force behind the civilian, industrial, military, and naval efforts under the leadership of President Wilson.⁹ Shaping the ideas and public opinion into a unified voice was a priority for the Wilson administration, under advisement from the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy, Executive Order 2594 established the Committee on Public Information (CPI).¹⁰ In a letter to the President, drafted by the three Secretaries, CPI would serve as an “authoritative agency to assure the publication of all the vital facts of

² Mock, James R., and Cedric Larson, *Words that Won the War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1939), 4.

³ Lasswell, Harold D., *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., LTD., (1938), 10.

⁴ Bruntz, 59.

⁵ Lambert, Richard S. *Propaganda*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, LTD., (1938), 21.

⁶ Viereck, George Sylvester, *Spreading the Germs of Hate*. New York: Horace Liveright, (1930), 170.

⁷ Lambert, 22.

⁸ Mock, 4, 10.

⁹ Mock, 5.

¹⁰ Mock, 51

national defense [in the Press]...Premature or ill-advised announcements of policies, plans, and specific activities, whether innocent or otherwise, would constitute a source of danger.”¹¹ CPI would manage censorship and publicity, framing regulations and creating machinery that would safeguard all information valuable to the enemy, whilst opening governmental agencies and departments to the inspection of the people in partnership efforts.¹² CPI would develop and lead a strategy in the fight for the mind of Mankind.¹³ Multiple conundrums complicated the context of propaganda in WWI. How can a modern democracy manage public opinion and ideas across the full spectrum of society? “With the printing press and the newspaper, the railroad, the telephone, telegraph, radio, and airplanes, ideas can be spread rapidly and even instantaneously over the whole of America.”¹⁴

On April 28, 1917, the President required government approval on all electronic communication in and out of the US to include cable, telephone, telegraph, and wireless.¹⁵ Additionally, the 1917 Espionage Act and 1918 Sedition Act restricted Constitutional rights of free speech and press.¹⁶ These conditions gave CPI leverage with the media and controlled the environment enabling opinion management and promoting President Wilson’s unifying message of US solidarity.

¹¹ Mock, 50.

¹² Mock, 50-51.

¹³ Mock, 74.

¹⁴ Bernays, Edward L., *Propaganda*. New York: Horace Liveright, (1928), 12.

¹⁵ Mock, 78.

¹⁶ Mock, 42, 46.

The 1917 Espionage Act section 3 of Title I [only two parts of the Espionage Act dealt with freedom of speech]: “Whoever, when the US is at war, shall willfully make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the US or to promote the success of its enemies; and whoever, when the US is at war, shall willfully cause or attempt to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty in the military or naval forces of the US, or shall willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the US, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both.”

The Sedition Act of 1918 (amendment of the Espionage Act) made punishable by penalties of \$10,000 and 20 years or both was the willful writing, utterance, or publication or any “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the US, or the Constitution, flag, uniform of army or navy, or any language intended to bring said entities into contempt, scorn, contumely, or disrepute.

Target Audience. The propaganda campaign in WWI focused on three distinct target audiences: the domestic audience, the neutral countries, and the enemy. The allies encompassed a pseudo-target audience because inter-allied cooperation remained extremely important to the propaganda effort.¹⁷ The domestic audience appeared critical to the war effort and the propaganda needed to appeal to the individual to support the national endeavor. The propaganda targeted the key individuals in every group, persons whose mere words carried authority to masses of followers.¹⁸ “We are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.”¹⁹ The consolidation of domestic opinion required organized propaganda targeted at mobilizing the press, the church, the cinema, the education system (universities, public and primary schools), and recruiting the best authors to publish books and articles.²⁰

The US secured alignment with Neutral countries as a critical target audience to dissuade the influence of enemy propaganda in those countries. The propaganda campaigns directed at neutral countries required expert direction to maintain consistency to other propaganda efforts while stressing various themes from one neutral country to the next.²¹ One example of neutral country influence included the CPI efforts to counteract German propaganda in South America, Spain, and Mexico. Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Argentina were unfriendly to the US, in part from the German propaganda efforts that had usurped US efforts in South and Central America.²²

US propaganda relentlessly targeted the enemy in WWI. The propaganda directed at the German autocrats and not the people

¹⁷ Lumley, Frederick E., *The Propaganda Menace*. New York: The Century Co., (1933), 238.

¹⁸ Bernays, 27.

¹⁹ Bernays, 11.

²⁰ Viereck, 275.

²¹ Bartlett, F.C., *Political Propaganda*. London: Cambridge University Press, (1942), 149.

²² Viereck, 203.

highlighted an important objective. America wanted to protect democracy and the people against the Kaiser and his militarists to make the world safe for democracy. The German government stood in the way.²³ The German people persisted as united and highly suspicious, making them less susceptible to US propaganda efforts.²⁴ American propaganda efforts in Germany took the form of promising freedom and independence to the German people and carefully avoided inconsistent or conflicting statements.²⁵ That propaganda theme benefited the German-American citizens and immigrants in the US that required concerted efforts to curb resentment of US foreign policy.²⁶

Inter-allied cooperation and maintaining friendly relationships and coordinated propaganda efforts proved integral to a united effort against Germany.²⁷ Disunity amongst the propaganda campaigns is highly problematic and any contradiction casts the entire propaganda effort into disrepute as contradictions affect neutrals, domestics, and the enemy.²⁸ The allies emphasized the coordination of propaganda as important as centralizing economic and military forces and therefore held the first inter-allied propaganda conference in London in March 1918.²⁹

Organization. The Committee on Public Information, successfully led by George Creel, became the focal point for all US propaganda efforts in WWI. Presidential Executive Order 2594, dated April 13, 1917, created CPI.³⁰ Creel accepted personal responsibility for every act of US

²³ Bruntz, 59-60.

²⁴ Lambert, 22.

²⁵ Lambert, 27.

²⁶ Viereck, 164.

²⁷ Lasswell, 24.

²⁸ Lasswell, 16.

²⁹ Bruntz, 59.

³⁰ Mock, 4; 51.

propaganda at home and abroad.³¹ CPI represented a small, but highly unified organization that enjoyed the full support of President Wilson. CPI established early in the timeline of US involvement in WWI and remained practically unchanged as an institution during the war.³² CPI's internal organization leveraged ad hoc principles and transformed itself to accomplish the propaganda mission by creating niche divisions and closing them immediately after their usefulness was exhausted.³³ The organization divided into two main sections: Foreign and Domestic.³⁴

The Domestic section generally consisted of the following divisions: Executive, Business Management, Stenography and Mimeographing, Production and Distribution, News, Official Bulletin, Foreign Language Newspapers, Civic and Educational Cooperation, Picture, Film, War Expositions, State Fair Exhibits, Industrial Relations, Labor Publications, Service, Pictorial Publicity, Cartoons, Advertising, Four-Minute Men, Syndicate Features, Women's War Work, Work with Foreign Born, and Speaking.³⁵ The Foreign section consisted of three entities: Wireless and Cable Service, Foreign Press Bureau, and Foreign Film Division.³⁶

In addition to George Creel as chairman of CPI, the other members included the Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy ensuring solidarity and unity between the departments of government to conduct censorship and publicity to safeguard critical information for the US.³⁷

³¹ Lumley, 221.

³² Lumley, 220-221.

³³ Mock, 65.

³⁴ Mock, 65.

³⁵ Mock, 66-73.

³⁶ Mock, 73-74.

³⁷ Mock, 50-51

Media Techniques. “Successful propaganda depends on the adroit use of means under favorable conditions. A means is anything which the propagandist can manipulate; a condition is anything to which he must adapt.”³⁸ The primary instrument of propaganda during this period became the Press, through the distribution of daily newspapers.³⁹ CPI provided the framework for regulation of information and on April 28, 1917, President Wilson clamped down on all cable, telephone, telegraph, and wireless information transiting into or out of the US.⁴⁰ Once favorable conditions existed, CPI used all available means of propaganda available—press, stage, pulpit, radio, telegraph, lobbying, and public platforms.⁴¹ Creel mobilized advertising forces, novelists, essayists, and publicists to sell the war effort to the public through newspapers, pamphlets, and leaflets.⁴² Two overarching principles applied to CPI’s media techniques, a unified policy managed the propaganda, and the techniques constantly changed to adapt to conditions.⁴³ For example, Creel employed 75,000 Four-Minute Men to deliver one million speeches, published the “Official Bulletin” daily newspaper to 100,000 readers, and mobilized the movie industry, painters, sculptors, designers, and cartoonists into the propaganda campaign.⁴⁴ CPI manipulated every means of communication between men—news, entertainment, education, sports, travel, business, arts, and religion.⁴⁵

³⁸ Lasswell, 185.

³⁹ Lambert, 24.

⁴⁰ Mock, 78.

⁴¹ Catlin, George E. Gordon. “Propaganda as a Function of Democratic Government.” In *Propaganda and Dictatorship*. Edited by Harwood Lawrence Childs, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, (1936), 143.

⁴² Lee, Alfred McClung. *How to Understand Propaganda*. New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., (1952), 97-98.

⁴³ Bartlett, 140-142.

⁴⁴ Viereck, 179-183. Four-Minute Men were required to deliver four-minute speeches to a variety of domestic audiences to keep the public informed of the official US government stance on current issues and answer questions. The premise was to get word of mouth distribution of ideas to the masses.

⁴⁵ Lambert, 160.

The media techniques used to influence the enemy included mortar guns with paper bullets, artillery shells with leaflets, rockets, balloons, leaflet hand-grenades, and airplanes dropping pamphlets in addition to other direct and indirect methods.⁴⁶ The creativity and diversity of media techniques used in WWI contributed to its label as “a postgraduate course for propagandists.”⁴⁷

Effects and Evaluation. What difference did the US propaganda campaign make on the outcome of WWI? The propaganda campaign’s measure of success evaluates the ability of CPI to consolidate and unify domestic opinion, influence and manipulate world opinion, and demoralize the enemy.⁴⁸ Domestically, the propaganda effects saturated the population. Popular sentiment supported a US policy that demanded the enemy’s unconditional surrender, a testament to the success of *selling the war* to the people.⁴⁹ The campaign resonated with the populace. The propaganda spurred a revolution of public opinion that changed the US and touched every man, woman, and child.⁵⁰ The American people united behind the phrase “Make the World Safe for Democracy.”⁵¹ The propaganda alone did not end the war exclusively, but the campaign was effective and probably helped hasten the end of the war.⁵² “Woodrow Wilson was the High Priest of American Propaganda. Without prejudicing the bravery of our Doughboys, it must be admitted that Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the paper bullets directed by Creel’s Propaganda Division won the war for the Allies.”⁵³ WWI established the

⁴⁶ Viereck, 204-207.

⁴⁷ Viereck, 275.

⁴⁸ Lambert, 21-22.

⁴⁹ Viereck, 210.

⁵⁰ Mock, 4.

⁵¹ Bruntz, 59.

⁵² Bruntz, 220.

⁵³ Viereck, 168.

importance of influence operations in modern warfare and using information as an instrument of power.

World War II Counterpropaganda 1939 – 1945

Ideology and Purpose. President Roosevelt delivered a speech to Congress nearly a year before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and outlined his “Four Essential Human Freedoms.”⁵⁴ Roosevelt underscored the freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear as fundamental American aims during this period of history.⁵⁵ Additionally, the Atlantic Charter agreement between the US and Britain outlined a post-war world vision of self-determining nations with equal trading rights within a system of general security.⁵⁶ The propaganda ideology between 1939 and 1941 reflected those basic American values of freedom and democracy in a global struggle against fascism.⁵⁷ President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9182 creating OWI in June 1942.⁵⁸ The Office of War Information (OWI) propaganda campaign adhered to a strategy of truth in the foreign and domestic arenas.⁵⁹ The domestic strategy was to *influence* American opinion through a delicate process of providing truthful information and letting the people make their own decisions.⁶⁰ OWI strategists attempted to

⁵⁴ Winkler, Alan M. *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942 – 1945*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, (1978), 5.

⁵⁵ Winkler, 5.

⁵⁶ Winkler, 5.

⁵⁷ Winkler, 6, 8-9.

⁵⁸ Shulman, Holly Cowan. *The Voice of America: Propaganda and Democracy, 1941-1945*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, (1990), 34.

Margolin, 90.

⁵⁹ Shulman, 36.

Steele, Richard W. *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, (1985), 172.

Margolin, Leo J. *Paper Bullets: A Brief Story of Psychological Warfare in World War II*. New York: Froben Press, (1946), 66.

Winkler, 27, 35, 76.

⁶⁰ Steele, 172. Winkler, 13.

shape the political beliefs and actions of their target audiences through their words and information campaign.⁶¹ The fight for democracy connected man's belief in liberty of mind and spirit, with a willingness to sacrifice comforts and earnings to protect democracy from fascism.⁶² This people's war affirmed to the world that the principles of democracy would defeat fascism wherever it existed.⁶³

After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the US commitment to the war, the public demanded more information required a stronger domestic propaganda effort.⁶⁴ The propaganda ideology between 1942 and 1945 reflected information-based support to military operations in Europe and the Pacific.⁶⁵ OWI abandoned the ideology of propaganda for action in a people's war between democracy and fascism to propaganda that provides news and information fully and faithfully as possible.⁶⁶ Redefining propaganda as information transformed the OWI strategy into broadcasting the maximum quantity of news to foreign and domestic audiences.⁶⁷

OWI compromised their ideological political democracy that resisted the evils of fascism for an information-based ideology that supported a military victory.⁶⁸ The political reality that military occupation would win the war over shaping political beliefs and winning the peace through words was a difficult transition for OWI.⁶⁹

OWI lacked clear responsibilities, guidelines, and authorities from its beginnings.⁷⁰ The purpose was to educate the public and inform the

⁶¹ Shulman, 92.

⁶² Winkler, 11.

⁶³ Winkler, 11.

⁶⁴ Winkler, 28-29.

⁶⁵ Margolin, 66. Shulman, 151.

⁶⁶ Winkler, 36-37. Shulman, 151.

⁶⁷ Shulman, 36.

⁶⁸ Shulman, 93, 130. Margolin, 66.

⁶⁹ Shulman, 93, 130.

⁷⁰ Winkler, 26. Shulman, 34.

American people about what the war is about, where it is going, and how the government is conducting it.⁷¹ Unfortunately, President Roosevelt lacked clear policy regarding the purpose of the war and the war aims making the OWI public education task more difficult.⁷² OWI provided truthful information to the American public and overseas audiences to promote Allied solidarity.⁷³

The WWII propaganda campaign encompassed three integrated objectives. First, the domestic campaign mobilized the population for war, boosted morale, and generated the necessary publicity to orient the troops and civilian populace.⁷⁴ Specific propaganda campaigns directed at US women sought to recruit laborers to engage in heavy-duty war work in positions traditionally identified with men.⁷⁵ Other domestic campaigns focused on securing specific public actions such as buying bonds to finance the war.⁷⁶ Civilian support for salvaging materials used for war production, fuel conservation, and food sharing initiatives represented other OWI domestic campaigns.⁷⁷ The domestic propaganda convinced each American to make a meaningful difference in the war effort and that combined effort established the prerequisite for victory. Second, the propaganda campaign on Neutral countries targeted populations liberated from Axis powers. Winning the hearts and minds of liberated people and reacquainting Europeans with the heritage,

⁷¹ Shulman, 36.

⁷² Winkler, 54.

⁷³ Winkler, 35, 135.

⁷⁴ Hensch, John B. *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, (2010), 5.

Rhodes, Anthony. *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion World War II*. New York and London: Chelsea House Publishers, (1976) 144-146.

Steele, 168-169.

⁷⁵ Nelson, Derek. *The Posters that Won the War*. Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, (1991), 71-77.

⁷⁶ *Paper Bullets: Great Propaganda Posters Axis & Allied Countries WWII*. New York and London: Chelsea House Publishers, (1977), 20.

Nelson, 68-70.

Winkler, 35.

⁷⁷ Winkler, 35, 62. Nelson, 28-34, 36-44.

history, and fundamental make-up of the US shaped post-war relationships.⁷⁸ The OWI campaign needed to stop the spread of Nazi influence in Neutral countries and defeat Nazi propaganda.⁷⁹ Third, the foreign campaign concentrated efforts to counter German and Japanese propaganda to the Allies.⁸⁰ The propaganda campaign aimed to undermine the German's will to resist the Allies.⁸¹ In the Pacific, the propaganda efforts focused on driving a wedge between the people and the Japanese government to set the conditions for surrender.⁸² OWI needed to prepare the world for the role America intended on playing during WWII.⁸³ The message "We are coming, we are going to win, and in the long run, everybody will be better off because we won" established a sense of confidence that a US victory will prove to be a good thing for the whole world.⁸⁴

Context. Two distinct periods defined the context of WWII propaganda. The first period, 1939 – 1941 represented neutrality and debate.⁸⁵ A fissure formed between the pro-Allies lobby to sell war materials to the Allies and the pro-Neutrality (Isolationist) lobby.⁸⁶ For many Americans, US involvement in WWI was a mistake and despite Hitler's widespread unpopularity, the sentiment prior to 1941 remained isolationist or neutral to the events in Europe.⁸⁷ The pro-Allies lobby led by President Roosevelt called for selling war materials to the Allies through the Lend-Lease Aid program often discussed during his famous fireside chats.⁸⁸ The second period, 1941-1945 represented the period from initial attack

⁷⁸ Hench, 6.

⁷⁹ Shulman, 5. Hench, 4.

⁸⁰ Hench, 4. Margolin, 62-65.

⁸¹ Winkler, 129.

⁸² Winkler, 139, 147.

⁸³ Winkler, 156.

⁸⁴ Winkler, 155.

⁸⁵ Cull, 447.

⁸⁶ Cull, 447-448. Rhodes, 139-144.

⁸⁷ Cull, 447-448. Rhodes, 139-144.

⁸⁸ Cull, 447-448.

on Pearl Harbor, the entire European campaign, and the atomic bombing of Japan.⁸⁹

Roosevelt was reluctant to establish any formal publicity channels and he did not want a CPI organization like the Wilson Administration during WWI.⁹⁰ Recognizing the importance of information dissemination, Roosevelt established several small 'information' entities with negligible authority and guidance, but broad missions.⁹¹ The Republicans feared these organizations would become propaganda agencies for the Roosevelt administration and conducted partisan attacks to undermine the credibility of the pseudo-propaganda agencies.⁹² The President made the decision to combine several of these organizations into the OWI including a range of mission sets that had conflicting functions.⁹³ OWI's Director, Elmer Davis, recognized the confusion in the government's multiple information programs and the effect it had on mobilizing support for the war.⁹⁴ He commented, "Under one head...with real power, they [the propaganda campaign] might get somewhere."⁹⁵ Unlike CPI, the OWI was not destined to become a central agency that would assume all the information functions and authority.⁹⁶

President Roosevelt supported OWI's early ideology through his rhetoric and Four Freedoms speech, but he often remained politically vague and general about his WWII intentions.⁹⁷ Roosevelt wanted to win the war and his willingness to compromise some democratic ideology created opportunities for OWI policies to conflict with foreign policy or

⁸⁹ Cull, 447-450.

⁹⁰ Winkler, 20.

⁹¹ Winkler, 20.

⁹² Winkler, 21.

⁹³ Margolin, 90. Rhodes, 144. Winkler, 35.

⁹⁴ Winkler, 33.

⁹⁵ Winkler, 33.

⁹⁶ Winkler, 34.

⁹⁷ Winkler, 6.

military operations during WWII.⁹⁸ These conflicts between OWI and the Department of State, Department of War, Department of the Navy, and even President Roosevelt, severely affected the integration of the propaganda campaign with the military effort in WWII.⁹⁹ Davis argued “OWI is under heavy attack—mostly partisan, malicious, and unjustified, but partly due to our failure to attain the standing contemplated by, and to perform all the duties assigned to us in Executive Order 9182.”¹⁰⁰ Davis made several difficult changes in OWI to regain footing in the war effort and reset relationships with the key players.

OWI desperately needed US objectives and war aims to wage an effective propaganda campaign through communicating and coordinating policy with foreign and domestic audiences. Roosevelt’s reluctance to articulate this policy was one critical factor affecting OWI.¹⁰¹ Davis also recognized the fundamental ideology needed to reflect political and military reality. Accepting fascist leaders in former Axis countries, like Italy, was in direct opposition to the initial democratic freedom ideology of OWI. The pursuit to end the war quickly led to a shift in ideology and a misalignment between OWI, military objectives, and foreign policy.¹⁰² Roosevelt gave OWI some authority to release war news and reversed tensions between the War Department and Department of the Navy with OWI.¹⁰³ Additionally, Davis made some administrative changes that facilitated a new information-based ideology that integrated with military objectives. The changes in administration, ideology, and news release authority reestablished OWI as an integrated propaganda machine with improved military and Allied coordination in both theaters of war.

⁹⁸ Margolin, 61-66. Winkler, 6-7.

⁹⁹ Shulman, 11. Winkler, 100-102.

¹⁰⁰ Winkler, 103.

¹⁰¹ Winkler, 84.

¹⁰² Shulman, 11.

¹⁰³ Winkler, 104.

Target Audience. Several distinct audiences received focused and deliberate propaganda during WWII. Domestic audiences comprised a critical target set for propagandists.¹⁰⁴ Within the domestic audience, OWI campaigned to all demographics for support, contribution, labor, and sacrifice.¹⁰⁵ Peoples liberated from Axis powers received specific propaganda to capitalize on the period of vulnerability and set conditions for post-war US relations.¹⁰⁶ OWI used propaganda to influence Occupied France and the French Resistance movement in addition to the Vichy French Government.¹⁰⁷ In the Pacific, OWI targeted the Philippines before the invasion and continued targeting both the Filipinos to keep them informed and morale high, and Japanese to encourage their surrender.¹⁰⁸ OWI paid Special attention to German propaganda to ensure the people distinguished between Allied propaganda intended for government and not the people.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, the propaganda targeted the Japanese people and the government independently.¹¹⁰ The OWI targeted Allies, military personnel, and Europeans to keep morale high through timely, accurate, and relevant information.¹¹¹

Organization. The Office of War Information (OWI), created in June 1942 by Executive Order 9182, represented the unified organizational structure for managing the US propaganda campaign.¹¹² Elmer Davis led OWI as director and provided oversight for the Domestic and

¹⁰⁴ Paper Bullets, 16, 20. Nelson, 12-13, 28-44. Winkler, 11, 156.

¹⁰⁵ Nelson, 28-34. Winkler, 11, 156.

¹⁰⁶ Hench, 6. Margolin, 31-35, 49. Paper Bullets, 10, 21.

¹⁰⁷ Shulman, 5, 9.

¹⁰⁸ Winkler, 138-139. Margolin, 49.

¹⁰⁹ Winkler, 126, 129. Margolin, 31, 51-54.

¹¹⁰ Winkler, 139, 147. Margolin, 44-47, 112-113.

¹¹¹ Shulman, 71. Winkler, 135. Margolin, 66.

¹¹² Hench, 5. Shulman, 34.

Overseas Branches.¹¹³ OWI came into existence as a conglomeration of several predecessor agencies that brought a multitude of competing functions.¹¹⁴ The Overseas Branch grew from the Foreign Information Service (FIS), so the transition was simple, compared to the Domestic Branch, and many personal relationships continued.¹¹⁵ Organizational integration with the military was different in each theater of war. In Europe, the integration of OWI into the military operations was contingent upon one commander, General Eisenhower, but in the Pacific, there were several commanders, who gave OWI an icy reception and made integration of propaganda difficult.¹¹⁶ President Truman abolished OWI in August 1945.¹¹⁷

Media Techniques. The WWII propaganda campaign leveraged the full complement of media techniques and technology to reach target audiences. Radio broadcasts reached foreign and domestic audiences and represented a critical medium of communication.¹¹⁸ OWI collaboration with commercial media produced domestic radio propaganda including advertisements, news, and entertainment designed to support the war effort.¹¹⁹ Voice of America (VOA) linked propagandists with enemy and neutral target audiences overseas through tailored radio broadcasts providing information, news, and messages.¹²⁰ VOA used calm and neutral news reporting techniques to present facts and

¹¹³ Sorensen, Thomas C. *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, (1968), 10.

Margolin, 90. Rhodes, 144.

¹¹⁴ Winkler, 35.

¹¹⁵ Winkler, 77.

¹¹⁶ Winkler, 137.

¹¹⁷ Shulman, 188.

¹¹⁸ Horten, Gerd. *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, (2002), 1.

Steele, 127-128.

¹¹⁹ Cull, 448. Steele, 168-169.

¹²⁰ Sorensen, 17. Margolin, 91.

information pertaining to the war.¹²¹ OWI avoided emotional appeals and focused on a sober presentation of relevant and timely “spot news” reports on the war.¹²² Using radio for propaganda was effective for several reasons. OWI enjoyed favorable working relationships with radio executives.¹²³ Radio stations communicated the issues of the war in a manner consistent with OWI objectives and were generally cooperative in the war effort.¹²⁴ Active measures to censor the radio, ensured critical data, such as weather forecast information, prevented enemy interception and use against the US.¹²⁵

Two examples of OWI’s written propaganda are *L’Amerique en Guerre* and *Victory* publications.¹²⁶ *L’Amerique en Guerre* provided occupied and unoccupied France with factual and non-argumentative information in a four-page tabloid.¹²⁷ *Victory* detailed the US efforts in the war for foreign audiences in Europe in a pamphlet-style magazine.¹²⁸ OWI writers produced articles and pamphlets to convey the evils of fascism and demonstrating the personal stake of the people to justify the sacrifices and expense for democratic freedom.¹²⁹ Books distributed throughout Europe provided a mechanism to spread American culture long after the war ended.¹³⁰

Motion pictures boosted morale and provided information about the war in domestic and overseas audiences. Domestically, motion pictures were one of the most effective media to inform and entertain during WWII.¹³¹ A particularly popular series of propaganda movies

¹²¹ Shulman, 6.

¹²² Winkler, 78. Steele, 172.

¹²³ Steele, 168-169. Rhodes, 147-148. Winkler, 60.

¹²⁴ Winkler, 62.

¹²⁵ Sweeney, 100-103. Nelson, 91-100.

¹²⁶ Sorensen, 17. Winkler, 66.

¹²⁷ Sorensen, 17.

¹²⁸ Winkler, 17-18.

¹²⁹ Winkler, 55. Rhodes, 146.

¹³⁰ Hench, 5.

¹³¹ Winkler, 57. Steele, 168-169. Rhodes 146, 151.

titled “Why We Fight” used this entertaining format to provide background information about the war to domestic audiences.¹³² Documentary movies and newsreels, produced specifically for foreign consumption, spread information to Allies and liberated Axis countries in Europe.¹³³

OWI utilized visual media, imagery, art, and posters to spread domestic propaganda and support the many campaigns for conservation, bond-buying, service, and sacrifice.¹³⁴ Of the more popular examples of visual propaganda are Norman Rockwell’s paintings representing Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms called “Ours...to fight for.”¹³⁵

The media techniques used in direct support of military operations proved invaluable in the latter stages of the war.¹³⁶ Leaflet warfare provided operational and tactical level propaganda support to the ground commander in Europe.¹³⁷ Mobile printing teams deployed into forward combat areas generated tactical leaflets and propaganda for paper bullets.¹³⁸ Newspapers were air dropped into occupied countries and enemy territory to provide information to the populations about the progress of the war.¹³⁹ In the Pacific, *Free Philippines Magazine* boosted the morale of the guerrillas and resistance movement with the promise that the US would return to the Philippines.¹⁴⁰ Using leaflets to notify the Japanese which cities would be bombed with B-29s made a profound psychological impact on the Japanese people.¹⁴¹ Other leaflet campaigns in the Pacific theater illustrated the Russian/US alliance used to prepare

¹³² Rhodes, 153.

¹³³ Winkler, 57.

¹³⁴ Rhodes, 161-176. Paper Bullets, 16, 20. Nelson, 50-66.

¹³⁵ Nelson, 48.

¹³⁶ Margolin, 16.

¹³⁷ Winkler, 117. Rhodes, 146. Margolin, 31, 94.

¹³⁸ Margolin, 93.

¹³⁹ Cull, 447-450. Margolin, 31, 51-54.

¹⁴⁰ Winkler, 139. Margolin, 49.

¹⁴¹ Margolin, 127.

the conditions for surrender.¹⁴² Leaflets used as security passes for surrender were effective in the European and Pacific theaters offering safe and humane treatment to any soldier that surrendered to US forces.¹⁴³ In addition to leaflets, OWI used mobile radio broadcasting, sound trucks, and ‘hog calling’ walkie-talkies to influence enemy forces.¹⁴⁴ Territory liberated from Axis control was primed for educational or occupational propaganda that spanned the gamut of newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, public addresses, and arts.¹⁴⁵

Effects and Evaluation. The tactical propaganda campaign that directly supported military operations in Europe represented the success story of US propaganda in WWII.¹⁴⁶ Post-war interviews with German military personnel supported these claims of success, “leaflets worked to destroy our resistance.”¹⁴⁷ The effectiveness of propaganda in the Pacific is less clear. Some historians argue the Japanese were defeated through military means over psychological means.¹⁴⁸ Others argue that propaganda helped immeasurably to win the military part of the global war.¹⁴⁹ Propaganda was not a substitution for bombs, but an auxiliary weapon that produced fantastic results when applied under the right conditions.¹⁵⁰ The lack of Japanese-speaking OWI propagandists plagued the leaflet campaign in the Pacific.¹⁵¹ OWI operated under

¹⁴² Margolin, 44-45, 48.

¹⁴³ Margolin, 46-47, 112-113

¹⁴⁴ Margolin, 31.

¹⁴⁵ Margolin, 31-35.

¹⁴⁶ Margolin, 16.

¹⁴⁷ Margolin, 94.

¹⁴⁸ Kushner, Barak. *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, (2006), 148.

¹⁴⁹ Margolin, 16.

¹⁵⁰ Margolin, 38.

¹⁵¹ Kushner, 152-153.

considerable public scrutiny from Congress, the media, and others resulting in mixed success throughout the war.¹⁵²

President Truman abolished OWI in August 1945, but retained the Voice of America radio broadcasting service.¹⁵³ The abolition of OWI testified to the strong American aversion to propaganda and reliance on military strength over softer forms of power.¹⁵⁴ The post-war VOA operated as a distinctly different agency than its wartime counterpart.¹⁵⁵ The Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 authorized overseas propaganda, but the US capacity to conduct it was severely limited.¹⁵⁶

Cold War Counterpropaganda 1947 – 1991

Ideology and Purpose: The Cold War propaganda followed an anti-communist ideology.¹⁵⁷ This propaganda ideology supported the Truman Doctrine, a foreign policy also known as containment, which guided US efforts to resist and defeat the global spread of communism.¹⁵⁸ President Truman addressed the Capitol on March 12, 1947, “at the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life,” and “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”¹⁵⁹ VOA was the nation’s propaganda and ideological arm to fight communism by

¹⁵² Hench, 5.

¹⁵³ Shulman, 188.

¹⁵⁴ Shulman, 186.

¹⁵⁵ Shulman, 199.

¹⁵⁶ Shulman, 189.

¹⁵⁷ Lucas, W. Scott, “Beyond Diplomacy: Propaganda and the History of the Cold War.” Chapter 1 in *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*. Edited by Gary D. Rawnsley. New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., (1999), 17.

¹⁵⁸ Krugler, David F. *The Voice of America and the Domestic Propaganda Battles, 1945-1953*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, (2000), 54.

Parry-Giles, Shawn J. *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda, and the Cold War, 1945-1955*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, (2002), 13.

¹⁵⁹ Krugler, 54.

garnering allies and discrediting the Soviet Union and other communist nations.¹⁶⁰ When Congress requested priority funding for the institutions that provide the Voice of America to promoting US values to the world, anti-communist propaganda was associated with Truman's containment doctrine.¹⁶¹ The VOA, considered by some, albeit unfairly, as a mere propaganda arm for the Truman Doctrine.¹⁶² The propaganda ideology represented the overt political use of propaganda in peacetime by VOA after WWII. VOA shifted from a "full and fair" propaganda approach as an unbiased and objective news service to a more aggressive agency to combat Soviet print and radio propaganda.¹⁶³ The propaganda ideology under the Truman administration committed to truthful reporting. On 20 April 1950, Truman announced "The Campaign of Truth" which outlined a strategy of using the truth to refute the communists' lies and delivering positive messages about US policies.¹⁶⁴

President Eisenhower staunchly supported the anti-communist propaganda ideology under the Truman administration. Eisenhower re-conceptualized the national security policy for a long-term struggle against communism. He recognized the Cold War as an ideological contest, a political war, a war of persuasion, a cultural war, and a propaganda war that would be won or lost on public opinion.¹⁶⁵ The

¹⁶⁰ Lucas, W. Scott, "Beyond Diplomacy: Propaganda and the History of the Cold War." Chapter 1 in *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*, 21. Krugler, 1.

¹⁶¹ Krugler, 57.

Lucas, W. Scott, "Beyond Diplomacy: Propaganda and the History of the Cold War." Chapter 1 in *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*, 17-19.

¹⁶² Krugler, 57.

¹⁶³ Lucas, W. Scott, "Beyond Diplomacy: Propaganda and the History of the Cold War." Chapter 1 in *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*, 19. Krugler, 7.

¹⁶⁴ Krugler, 96.

¹⁶⁵ Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*. Edited by Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns. Lanham, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., (2006), 3, 16-17.

propaganda ideology once based on overt truths became a mixture of overt truth and covert strategies.¹⁶⁶

The purpose of the Cold War propaganda was to promote broad American aims to the world and discredit the Soviet Union and other communist nations.¹⁶⁷ Anti-communist propaganda would rollback communism wherever it appeared in the world.¹⁶⁸ Propaganda was part of a bipartisan offensive to stop the spread of communism and garner economic and military allies for the US.¹⁶⁹ Anti-colonialism and nationalism in the third world set conditions for communism or anti-US policy that would limit US access to raw materials, economic markets, or strategic locations.¹⁷⁰ The campaign to educate the world on US policies would promote democracy as a more attractive alternative to communism.¹⁷¹ Presidents Truman and Eisenhower used propaganda as an integral component of foreign affairs, a preventative measure that existed apart from the practice of war.¹⁷² Throughout the Cold War and beyond the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, the ultimate purpose of propaganda remained committed to containing and defeating communism.

Context. Truman's decision to retain a peacetime propaganda capability within VOA during the post-WWII demobilization carried tremendous

¹⁶⁶ Osgood, Kenneth. *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, (2006), 102.

¹⁶⁷ Krugler, 7.

¹⁶⁸ Osgood, 149.

¹⁶⁹ Krugler, 2.

¹⁷⁰ Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 4.

¹⁷¹ Parry-Giles, 18-19. Krugler, 7.

¹⁷² Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 16-17. Krugler, 13. Parry-Giles, 21.

political baggage.¹⁷³ For many in the US government, the VOA symbolized political goals and served political agendas not related to its basic mission, as the ideological arm of US anti-communism.¹⁷⁴ Congressional conservatives opposed New Deal over-spending on VOA, and any perception of government manipulation of the media for partisan agendas. Conservatives supported VOA's anti-communist ideology, but voted to cut the funding needed to operate the agency.¹⁷⁵ Many critics believed VOA duplicated and competed with commercial radio, was too costly, and unnecessarily educated the world on US policies when not required.¹⁷⁶ Truman's decision to dissolve OWI and transfer VOA to the Department of State was opposed by Secretary of State Byrnes.¹⁷⁷ Byrnes considered propaganda ineffective, unnecessary, and an obstacle to traditional forms of diplomacy.¹⁷⁸

Senator McCarthy's communism investigation into VOA caused immeasurable damage to the US propaganda apparatus.¹⁷⁹ The VOA employed aliens as highly skilled, bi-lingual, or multi-lingual speakers and provided a rich target for Senator McCarthy's hunt for subversive communists.¹⁸⁰ The threat of domestic communism became contextually important as the spread of international communism.¹⁸¹

VOA continually faced difficulty in getting specific foreign policy guidance to relay to their target audiences. This problem was worse during a crisis and unexpected events.¹⁸² For example, during the 1950 propaganda campaigns in China, VOA broadcasts and reporting caused

¹⁷³ Krugler, 2-3.

¹⁷⁴ Krugler, 2-4.

¹⁷⁵ Krugler, 3-4, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Krugler, 5, 13.

¹⁷⁷ Krugler, 8-9.

¹⁷⁸ Krugler, 8-9.

¹⁷⁹ Parry-Giles, 108-122.

¹⁸⁰ Krugler, 48.

¹⁸¹ Krugler, 8.

¹⁸² Krugler, 9.

a conflict in Far East foreign policy interpreted by Conservatives as biased promotion of a partisan Presidential agenda.¹⁸³ In order to report the news and official US policy, the VOA required up-to-date specific foreign policy guidance, while any mistake was construed internationally as official US policy, or domestically as partisan politics.¹⁸⁴

Target Audience. The target audience for propaganda during the Cold War was enormous given the scope and duration of the conflict. Initially, the target was public opinion in the non-Soviet world and in particular, those who were not yet committed to opposing communism.¹⁸⁵ US propaganda targeted Eastern Europe including Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria, to usurp communism in regions close to the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁶ The US targeted the Soviet Union to influence youth, student leaders, educators, labor leaders, military officers, and intellectuals into defecting to the US.¹⁸⁷ Emerging Third World states and post-colonial regions in Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East represented key battlegrounds in anti-communist propaganda.¹⁸⁸ US propaganda efforts were difficult in many

¹⁸³ Krugler, 95.

¹⁸⁴ Krugler, 149.

¹⁸⁵ Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 7.

¹⁸⁶ Puddington, Arch. *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.* Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, (2000), 61. Krugler, 150, 155.

Parry-Giles, 49.

¹⁸⁷ Buell, William A., "Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty in the Mid 1980s." Chapter 4 in *Western Broadcasting Over the Iron Curtain.* Edited by K.R.M. Short. New York: St. Martin's Press, (1986), 75. Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 16.

¹⁸⁸ Vaughan, James R. *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1945-1957, Unconquerable Minds.* Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, (2005), 239.

Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 3-4. Parry-Giles, 36, 107. Puddington, xi.

of the post-colonial regions because of collaboration perceptions linking the US to European imperialists.¹⁸⁹ The US targeted communism in Cuba, China, and Korea throughout periods of the Cold War.¹⁹⁰ Some argue the US propaganda campaign targeted the domestic audience through news media reporting, framing, and manipulation techniques.¹⁹¹

Organization. In August 1945, President Truman moved the VOA into the State Department.¹⁹² The Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 provided permanent standing and legal authority for the Department of State to distribute publications and films, conduct intellectual exchanges, and operate VOA.¹⁹³ In an effort to provide cohesive and integrated propaganda guidance, Truman created the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) with representation from Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Council (NSC), Department of Defense (DoD), and Department of State (DoS).¹⁹⁴

Secretary of State Dulles detached VOA from the DoS, a move to rid the department of a perceived problem, rather than making the VOA more effective.¹⁹⁵ On 1 August 1953, the VOA re-aligned under a newly created United States Information Agency (USIA).¹⁹⁶ The move gave the

Buell, William A., "Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty in the Mid 1980s." Chapter 4 in *Western Broadcasting Over the Iron Curtain*, 73.

¹⁸⁹ Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 4.

¹⁹⁰ Krugler, 8, 94-95, 117. Parry-Giles, 107.

Buell, William A., "Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty in the Mid 1980s." Chapter 4 in *Western Broadcasting Over the Iron Curtain*, 73.

¹⁹¹ Bernhard, Nancy E. *US Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, (1999), 17.

¹⁹² Parry-Giles, 5. Krugler, 1.

¹⁹³ Kugler, 7, 58.

¹⁹⁴ Parry-Giles, 51. Krugler, 9.

¹⁹⁵ Krugler, 10.

¹⁹⁶ Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 6. Krugler, 10, 208.

US propaganda enterprise a degree of autonomy and a much-needed fresh start following Senator McCarthy's investigations and the purging of foreign propaganda experts from the DoS.¹⁹⁷ Theodore Streibert was named Director of USIA, and he immediately created the Office of Policy and Programs to generate media guidance and define goals, policies, and content for US propaganda.¹⁹⁸ Organizationally, USIA remained under the same construct until the Carter administration renamed USIA, US International Communication Agency (USICA) to emphasize the two-way communication between teaching US values and learning about other countries and cultures.¹⁹⁹ President Reagan restored USIA to the original configuration that existed prior to the Carter administration.²⁰⁰ Under President Clinton, the International Broadcasting Act established the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) that existed under USIA control.²⁰¹ The IBB supervised all non-military governmental broadcast services to include Radio Free Europe (RFE), Radio Liberty (RL), VOA, Worldnet television, Radio and TV Marti, and Radio Free Asia (RFA).²⁰² The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) has oversight of the IBB and all subordinate broadcasts. The BBG exists to promote open communication of information and ideas in support of democracy and freedom worldwide. On 1 October 1999, BBG became independent, autonomous, and responsible for all government-sponsored non-military international broadcasting.²⁰³ USIA was reorganized under DoS and renamed International Information Programs (IIP).²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁷ Krugler, 208.

¹⁹⁸ Krugler, 209.

¹⁹⁹ Parry-Giles, 188.

²⁰⁰ Parry-Giles, 189.

²⁰¹ Parry-Giles, 190.

²⁰² Parry-Giles, 190.

²⁰³ Parry-Giles, 190.

²⁰⁴ Parry-Giles, 190.

Media Techniques. Between 1945 and 1953, the DoS used five cultural programs as propaganda, the most prominent was the VOA.²⁰⁵ The other four included press and publications, motion pictures, personnel exchanges, and overseas libraries.²⁰⁶

The Campaign of Truth was designed to counter the Soviet's 'Hate America' campaign. Truman proposed that through the Campaign of Truth, the US would refute the Soviet's lies and deliver positive messages about the US and its policies to the world.²⁰⁷ The campaign used autobiographies written by defectors from communist countries and other books to present an alternative perspective of society without communism.²⁰⁸

President Eisenhower's ideal propaganda campaign marshaled all the resources of government, and garnered private support in a massive coordinated assault to deliver select themes to specific target audiences.²⁰⁹ His campaign used covert and overt propaganda media techniques.²¹⁰ Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL) engaged in aggressive propaganda through covert channels to complement VOA propaganda broadcasts through overt channels.²¹¹ RFE operated as an anti-communist station broadcasting information into Eastern European countries.²¹² One effective media technique included broadcasting defector stories and experiences on the radio. RFE employed defectors to discuss life experiences in a democracy to their homelands and criticize

²⁰⁵ Kugler, 1.

²⁰⁶ Kugler, 1.

²⁰⁷ Pirsein, Robert William. *The Voice of America: An History of the International Broadcasting Activities of the United States Government 1940-1962*. New York: Arno Press, (1979), 200-204.

Krugler, 8, 96. Parry-Giles, 58-59.

²⁰⁸ Parry-Giles, 76, 95.

²⁰⁹ Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 4.

²¹⁰ Parry-Giles, 143.

²¹¹ Krugler, 159. Parry-Giles, 52-53.

²¹² Puddington, 21.

communist activities such as, secret police torture, rigged elections, and other Soviet controls over society.²¹³ RL debuted in March 1953 (originally as Radio Liberation) to broadcast propaganda directly into the Soviet Union and attempt to unify Russian exiles.²¹⁴ RFE/RL broadcasted under auspices of private enterprise and therefore, was not endorsed by the US government or accountable to US government official positions.²¹⁵ VOA told the story of America and portrayed free enterprise and democracy through selective radio content, specific target audiences, and emphasis on news, documentaries, and positive messages.²¹⁶ One specific radio program, called “Know North America,” attempted to educate target audiences on North American culture.²¹⁷

The balloon campaign distributed leaflets, newspapers, stickers, and political souvenirs into Hungary and Czechoslovakia targeting collective farmers and national elections using balloons and prevailing winds for propaganda.²¹⁸ The State Department also used more traditional propaganda media techniques, such as the magazine “Amerika.”²¹⁹

Eisenhower knew that US propaganda ultimately needed to be concerned with world opinion, and therefore relied on carefully matching words and deeds.²²⁰ “What we do will be vastly more important than what we say.”²²¹ Cultural diplomacy, as a media technique, capitalized on developing an “American Ideology” to counter communism using aid

²¹³ Puddington, 33-34.

²¹⁴ Krugler, 164. Puddington, 153.

²¹⁵ Osgood, 102-103. Puddington, 19.

²¹⁶ Osgood, 255.

²¹⁷ Parry-Giles, 35-37.

²¹⁸ Puddington, 61.

²¹⁹ Parry-Giles, 20.

²²⁰ Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 5.

²²¹ Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 6.

programs.²²² These aid programs did not seek immediate changes in the attitudes, perceptions, and values of the targeted audiences, but instead sought to influence them over time. Certain programs taught English, improved educational processes, provided books, textbooks, publications, and libraries.²²³ These cultural programs provided long-range favorable conditions abroad for US policies.²²⁴ USIA based propaganda on atomic energy programs, the peaceful use of atomic energy or “atoms for peace,” as well as other scientific endeavors, race relations, economic production, intellectual accomplishments, and disarmament negotiations.²²⁵ Finally, American youth culture, rock music, and pop culture generated liberating attitudes as effective media techniques in combating communism during the Cold War.²²⁶

Effects and Evaluation. Some aspects of the Cold War propaganda campaign represent successful strategies, such as the radio broadcasts from VOA and RFE/RL, while other aspects, such as Middle Eastern propaganda were failures.²²⁷ “VOA’s propaganda and dissemination of American culture abroad brought tangible results in making American style of democracy and capitalism desirable to foreign audiences while minimizing the attraction to communism.”²²⁸ RFE/RL proved to be one

²²² Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 9.

²²³ Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 16-17

²²⁴ Osgood, 215.

²²⁵ Osgood, 287. Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 8. Parry-Giles, 162-164.

²²⁶ Puddington, 134, 144.

²²⁷ Puddington, 19, 313. Vaughan, 248-249. McIntosh, Mary., “Public Opinion Assessment and Radio Free Europe’s Effectiveness in Eastern Europe.” Chapter 13 in *Western Broadcasting Over the Iron Curtain*, 247-248. Krugler, 10. Rawnsley, Gary D., “The Campaign of Truth: A Populist Propaganda.” Chapter 2 in *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*, 42-43.

²²⁸ Krugler, 10.

of the most successful propaganda mechanisms of the Cold War leading to the demise of communism. RFE was successful in supporting the Eastern European resistance to Soviet communism.²²⁹ One Polish spokesperson said, “If you closed RFE, the underground [resistance] would cease to exist.”²³⁰ RFE/RL enjoyed propaganda successes beyond VOA because the façade of private corporations detached RFE/RL from political oversight, government control, partisan bias, and dangers of misrepresenting US policies.²³¹ One success indicator for RFE/RL was Soviet attempts to block the transmissions into their country. Soviet jamming was either a testament to the effectiveness of RFE/RL or an indication of the perceived danger of radio propaganda.²³²

Some aspects of the Cold War propaganda campaign were not as successful as the VOA and RFE/RL broadcasts, such as the propaganda directed at the Middle East. Eisenhower recognized that successful propaganda rested on a fundamental premise that word must match deeds and policy should reflect certain psychological considerations.²³³ In many respects, the failure of the propaganda campaign in the Third World and Middle East were a reflection of that policy failure. For example, propaganda messages in the Middle East and North Africa lost their value when target audiences became aware of the racism and segregation that existed in the US.²³⁴ The US turned to cultural propaganda methods to overcome this disparity between words and deeds through intellectual engagement, ideological, and linguistic efforts

²²⁹ Puddington, 19, 313.

²³⁰ McIntosh, Mary., “Public Opinion Assessment and Radio Free Europe’s Effectiveness in Eastern Europe.” Chapter 13 in *Western Broadcasting Over the Iron Curtain*, 247-248.

²³¹ Krugler, 165.

²³² Puddington, 214.

²³³ Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 4.

²³⁴ Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 5.

in those regions.²³⁵ The relationship between propaganda and policy making must, therefore, be at the heart of any western propaganda strategy. A propaganda strategy cannot exist in isolation from the policy context in which it was formulated.²³⁶ The western propaganda policy and Cold War context did not apply to the Middle East because despite the technical competence of the propaganda, it was not able to affect significant political change in the Middle East.²³⁷ There were no significant shifts in western political policies on Arab nationalism or the Arab/Israeli dispute to constitute deeds that would match the propaganda rhetoric.²³⁸



²³⁵ Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 5.

²³⁶ Vaughan, 239.

²³⁷ Vaughan, 248-249.

²³⁸ Vaughan, 248-249.

Chapter 3

Guidelines from Historical Case Studies

Therefore, when I have won a victory I do not repeat my tactics but respond to circumstances in an infinite variety of ways.

--Sun Tzu

Using historical case studies to distill guidelines for future strategy carries risks and rewards. This chapter examines the key aspects of WWI, WWII, and Cold War propaganda campaigns for guidelines applicable to future strategy. The three case studies produced five guidelines including; organizational structure, unified policy, disaggregation of the target audience, employing a cognitive-level approach, and a campaign of truth. The political and contextual factors within each case study must remain paramount to understanding the guidelines. There are no panaceas. These guidelines represent a sample of best practices within historical context and serve only to inform a new counterpropaganda strategy by providing guidance for consideration.

Guideline One – Organizational Structure

The propaganda campaigns in all three case studies shared one common characteristic, an established civilian-led organization dedicated to conducting propaganda. The organizational structures provided leadership and authority to conduct global propaganda operations. These organizations remained separate from, but integrated with, military operations.

In WWI, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) organized itself into foreign and domestic branches under one director, George Creel, and enjoyed full support from President Wilson.¹ The CPI demonstrated effective propaganda coordination, unified control, consistency, and integrated efforts with other government departments.² The CPI organizational structure received credit for the successful propaganda campaign in WWI. CPI demonstrated the importance of having a centralized agency for controlling information rather than uncoordinated propaganda from several piecemeal agencies.³ The organization's leadership developed relationships with other government departments and coordinated propaganda efforts between Allies by continually changing scope and direction of operations under fixed main objectives.⁴

During WWII, the Office of War Information (OWI) established the focal point for foreign and domestic propaganda, but did not leverage the full support of President Roosevelt.⁵ Roosevelt created several entities that performed a variety of propaganda-like functions before

¹ Mock, James R., and Cedric Larson, *Words that Won the War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1939), 65.

Lee, Alfred McClung. *How to Understand Propaganda*. New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., (1952), 97.

Lumley, Frederick E. *The Propaganda Menace*. New York: The Century Co., (1933), 220-221.

² Lambert, Richard S. *Propaganda*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, LTD., (1938), 30-31.

³ Lambert, 145.

⁴ Bartlett, F.C., *Political Propaganda*. London: Cambridge University Press, (1942), 133.

Catlin, George E. Gordon. "Propaganda as a Function of Democratic Government." In *Propaganda and Dictatorship*. Edited by Harwood Lawrence Childs, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, (1936), 144.

Bruntz, George G., *Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918*. Stanford University, CA: Stanford University Press, (1938), 40.

Mock, 48.

⁵ Sorensen, Thomas C. *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, (1968), 10.

Hench, John B. *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, (2010), 5.

Shulman, Holly Cowan. *The Voice of America: Propaganda and Democracy, 1941-1945*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, (1990), 11.

consolidating all the propaganda under OWI in 1942.⁶ OWI operated domestic and overseas branches under the direction of Elmer Davis.⁷ Domestically, the organization provided the American people the full understanding of what the war was about and how the government was going to conduct it.⁸ Overseas, OWI propaganda aimed at stopping the spread of Nazism.⁹ Organizationally, the OWI was not as effective integrating propaganda and establishing relationships among other government departments. Political issues put OWI at odds with US foreign policy, the Departments of State, War, Navy, and the President.¹⁰ Roosevelt intentionally restricted the authority of OWI, which limited the organization to suggesting rather than demanding the integration of propaganda.¹¹ Roosevelt disbanded OWI following WWII and eliminated their organizational role in propaganda as a tool of foreign policy.¹²

The Cold War propaganda organization, ultimately United States Information Agency (USIA), was subject to many reorganizational efforts as presidential administrations and contexts changed.¹³ Retaining VOA broadcasting after WWII shifted the strategy of propaganda from a wartime activity to peacetime operations. The USIA Office of Policy and Programs created guidance for propaganda media and established objectives, goals, policy, and content.¹⁴

⁶ Hench, 5.

⁷ Sorensen, 10.

⁸ Shulman, 36.

⁹ Shulman, 5.

¹⁰ Shulman, 11.

¹¹ Shulman, 34.

¹² Shulman, 186.

¹³ Krugler, David F. *The Voice of America and the Domestic Propaganda Battles, 1945-1953*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, (2000), 10, 208.

Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*. Edited by Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns. Lanham, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., (2006), 6.

¹⁴ Krugler, 209.

Each of the propaganda organizations throughout the historical case studies maintained independence from the military, but close relationships for integration into military operations. The propaganda organizations allowed global influence operations and distribution of propaganda to foreign and domestic audiences. The propaganda organization must be linked into the political context to ensure cohesion of propaganda to policy, but equally important is the ability and authority of the organization to take actions in a timely manner.

Guideline Two – Unified Policy for Counterpropaganda

Conducting counterpropaganda effectively requires the US government to develop, and adhere to a unified policy. A unified policy fosters cohesion and unity of effort across all government entities that are involved in propaganda. The US must state openly the policy itself, at a minimum, for the overt propaganda campaign. The counterpropaganda policy should identify objectives and strategy to clarify audiences, end states, and funding in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of the policy beyond political rhetoric.

The WWI case study illustrated a unified counterpropaganda policy.¹⁵ The campaign's objectives, to garner domestic support for the war, demoralize the enemy, and influence neutral countries and Allies were clearly articulated.¹⁶ President Wilson fully supported and guided CPI's policy including funding and requisite authorities to implement their policy.¹⁷ Counterpropaganda policy established a unified approach to defeating the enemy avoiding contradictions that would cast the

¹⁵ Lambert, 21.

¹⁶ Mock, 4.

¹⁷ Lambert, 26-27.

campaign into disrepute.¹⁸ A unified counterpropaganda policy was essential in managing the unity of effort across all instruments of national power.

President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9182 that created OWI, but failed to create a unified policy for propaganda.¹⁹ The WWII case study illustrated the danger of disunity in a propaganda campaign. The political problems faced by OWI created fissures between themselves and every critical government department needed to support the propaganda campaign, including Departments of State, War, Navy, and the President himself.²⁰ OWI developed their ideology on Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" and the propaganda policy implications often contradicted US foreign policy objectives.²¹ These contradictions and disunity forced OWI to make policy concessions in an attempt to salvage the WWII propaganda campaign. OWI operated under considerable scrutiny by Congress and the Press, having mixed success throughout the war.²²

Cold War propaganda targeted the spread of communism across the globe. The propaganda policy operated in peacetime, characterized as a preventive measure that could exist apart from the practice of war.²³ President Eisenhower recognized the importance of a unified policy for propaganda and of establishing cohesion between words and deeds.²⁴ The matching of words and deeds was extremely difficult during the Cold War years and in many Third World areas, this policy failed. In many

¹⁸ Lasswell, Harold D., *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., LTD., (1938), 16.

¹⁹ Shulman, 34.

²⁰ Shulman, 11.

²¹ Winkler, Alan M. *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942 – 1945*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, (1978), 5.

²² Hench, 5.

²³ Parry-Giles, Shawn J. *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda, and the Cold War, 1945-1955*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, (2002), 21.

²⁴ Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 4.

post-colonial areas of Africa and the Middle East, the populations viewed the US as collaborators with European imperialists. Segregation and racism in the US perpetuated distrust of the US and their anti-communist propaganda messages.²⁵

A unified propaganda policy facilitated positive working relationships between government departments. Additionally, a unified policy identified the necessary guidelines to ensure the deeds matched the words. Unified propaganda policy facilitated unity of effort, a prerequisite for a successful influence campaign.

Guideline Three – Disaggregation of the Target Audience

Counterpropaganda campaigns require precision messaging and the three case studies illustrated a diversity of target audiences. During wartime, a natural tendency is to associate propaganda with demoralizing the enemy forces, but a concerted effort requires domestic and neutral target audience influence as well. The three case studies demonstrated varying degrees of success in disaggregating the target audiences and applying specific propaganda techniques specifically suited to each unique audience.²⁶

The WWI case study was a showcase for disaggregating the target audiences for propaganda. During WWI, the US strategy targeted five separate audiences. First, the US influenced domestic public opinion to garner support for the war and prepare the populace for future sacrifice. Second, US propaganda used patriotic and emotive messages aimed at the morale of the military fighting forces. Third, specific propaganda

²⁵ Osgood, Kenneth A., "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World." Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 4.

²⁶ Mackenzie, A.J., *Propaganda Boom*. London: The Right Book Club, (1938), 64.

integrated with military operations targeted enemy forces. Fourth, neutral countries in the war received news and information to ensure neutrality and prevent enemy influences. Finally, the Allies received propaganda to maintain unity, increase morale, distribute information, and build solidarity.²⁷ The WWI propaganda campaign carefully avoided inconsistent or conflicting statements or promises among the various target audiences.²⁸ Unfortunately, the techniques and methodologies used by Creel's CPI gave the term *propaganda* a sinister, distorted, and unpleasant connotation after WWI.²⁹

OWI used tailored propaganda campaigns for a variety of domestic and overseas target audiences.³⁰ The propaganda campaign focused on garnering domestic support for the war effort, including food rationing, material and fuel conservation, and industrial labor.³¹ Furthermore, the campaign targeted specific demographics, such as women, soliciting them for industrial labor.³² The overseas propaganda effort focused on preventing the spread of Nazi influence and regime throughout Europe and imperial Japanese regime in the Pacific.³³ The OWI campaign also launched campaigns targeting neutral countries, and countries formerly occupied by Axis powers.³⁴ Specific propaganda targeted the German people themselves to ensure they understood the Allied intentions against the Nazi regime and not the German people.³⁵

²⁷ Bartlett, 140.

²⁸ Lambert, 27. Bartlett, 140.

²⁹ Bernays, Edward L. *Propaganda*. New York: Horace Liveright, (1928), 20-21.

³⁰ Hench, 4-5.

³¹ Nelson, Derek. *The Posters that Won the War*. Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, (1991), 28-44.

Hench, 5.

³² Nelson, 71-77.

³³ Shulman, 5.

³⁴ Hench, 6.

Margolin, Leo J. *Paper Bullets: A Brief Story of Psychological Warfare in World War II*. New York: Froben Press, (1946), 35.

³⁵ Margolin, 62-65.

The Cold War propaganda campaign to contain communism was a global operation that targeted Eastern Europe, Third World nations in Africa, Asia, and Middle East, and behind the “Iron Curtain.”³⁶ The disaggregation of target audiences became less of a priority than countering communist ideology and influence. This trade-off proved costly in certain areas of Asia, Middle East, and Africa, while enjoying more success in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.³⁷

Guideline Four – Cognitive-Based Approach

Counterpropaganda strategies rely on three components of the information environment for influence operations, physical infrastructure, content, and cognition.³⁸ The counterpropaganda strategy in the physical infrastructure component includes destroying or damaging the enemy’s equipment and capabilities used to communicate. These kinetic actions link the counterpropaganda with military operations against the enemy.³⁹ For example, destroying the enemy’s newspaper production facility represents physical infrastructure capability to generate propaganda. A counterpropaganda strategy that attacks content refers to the actual availability and integrity of the information.⁴⁰ For example, a counterpropaganda strategy of censoring information in newspapers, magazines, radio, wireless, and television represents content availability. Additionally, the jamming or blocking of

³⁶ Krugler, 94-95, 117, 150, 155. Osgood, Kenneth A., “Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower’s Propaganda War in the Third World.” Chapter 1 in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War.*, 3-7. Parry-Giles, 107.

³⁷ Vaughan, James R. *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1945-1957, Unconquerable Minds.* Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, (2005), 239, 243, 248-249.

³⁸ Lachow, Irving, “Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?” Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security.* Edited by Franklin D. Kramer, Stuart H. Starr, and Larry K. Wentz. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, (2009), 459-461.

³⁹ Lachow, Irving, “Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?” Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 459.

⁴⁰ Lachow, Irving, “Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?” Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 460-461.

radio and television broadcasts from specific geographic regions are another example of manipulating content or information availability. A counterpropaganda strategy that focuses on the content's integrity involves manipulating the information to create distrust or alternatives for the target audience. Creating false news leaflets for German soldiers on the front lines created an illusion of guidance and information from German HHQ, but actually represented Allied psychological operations leaflets. The cognitive component of the information environment relates to how people perceive information and how they make decisions, sometimes referred to as perception management.⁴¹ For example, providing aid services, food, and water, to war-displaced populations creates a positive image and reputation among the displaced persons for the US and US policies.

The WWI case study provided ample evidence for a counterpropaganda strategy that leveraged content manipulation, primarily through controlling availability. The censorship policies, control of all electronic communications, and Espionage Act (later Sedition Act) generated the legitimate authority for CPI over US media.⁴² The appreciation for the superiority of indirect and subtler forms of propaganda to the more overt and direct forms occurred later in the war.⁴³ Censoring media content and access to information or destroying enemy communications infrastructure is effective, but has geographic and temporal limits. Cognitive-based counterpropaganda relies on a consistent, enduring effort to create or shape events to influence public relations.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Lachow, Irving, "Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 461.

⁴² Mock, 42, 46.

⁴³ Lambert, 152.

⁴⁴ Bernays, 25.

The WWII case study represented a more balanced approach to counterpropaganda using physical infrastructure, content, and cognitive methodologies, perhaps a predominant shift in focus towards the cognitive approach. The counterpropaganda effort strived to “win the peace” through shaping political beliefs or actions of a target audience using words and information.⁴⁵ Some counterpropaganda techniques failed to move people to action, but informing the target audience and allowing them to make their own decisions offered a glimpse of success.⁴⁶ One successful technique used books, written for a specific target audience in their language, as weapons in the war of ideas.⁴⁷ The US distributed these books in countries liberated from Axis control to educate the population on US ideology and policies in order to win their hearts and minds.⁴⁸ The philosophy of cognitive-based counterpropaganda relies in part on a defense against enemy propaganda through educating the target audience.⁴⁹ An example of cognitive-based counterpropaganda was long-range strategic VOA broadcasts used to influence enemy populations.⁵⁰ Cognitive-based counterpropaganda is an auxiliary weapon that can produce fantastic results when applied under the right conditions.⁵¹

The Cold War case study provided several examples of cognitive-based counterpropaganda with mixed successes. President Eisenhower avoided focusing solely on the military dimension of conflict and gave credence to the ideological factors during the Cold War. He believed the fight against the spread of communism was a war of persuasion, a cultural war, and a propaganda war, that would be won or lost in public

⁴⁵ Shulman, 92.

⁴⁶ Shulman, 151.

⁴⁷ Hench, 5.

⁴⁸ Hench, 6.

⁴⁹ Margolin, 19.

⁵⁰ Margolin, 31.

⁵¹ Margolin, 38.

opinion.⁵² The VOA was the most prominent example of the five media cultural programs that leveraged a cognitive-based approach to combating the influence of communism.⁵³ Additionally, developing an “American ideology” to counter communism using a variety of aid programs in Third World countries encouraged pro-US attitudes among the targeted audiences.⁵⁴ The Cold War’s long duration provided the context a cultural diplomacy policy that did not seek immediate changes in attitudes, perceptions, and values of target audiences, but sought to gradually mold them over time.⁵⁵

Guideline Five – Authenticity: Tell the Truth

Allied propagandists claimed their information was invariably truthful.⁵⁶ “The first of all axioms of propaganda is that only truthful statements be made.” The greatest sin in propaganda is telling a lie and getting caught.⁵⁷

WWI propaganda literature reinforced the merits of a truthful propaganda campaign. Much of the effectiveness of propaganda depends directly on the reputation for accurate and factual information.⁵⁸ One lie could have repercussions on the propaganda campaign and political relationships for years, if not generations.⁵⁹ A general principle of propaganda is that it should contain at least a kernel of truth. An element of truth protects against the deadly repercussions of an exposed

⁵² Statler and Johns (eds.), 3, 16-17.

⁵³ Krugler, 1.

⁵⁴ Statler and Johns (eds.), 9.

⁵⁵ Statler and Johns (eds.), 16.

⁵⁶ Lambert, 29.

⁵⁷ Lambert, 29.

⁵⁸ Bartlett, 144.

⁵⁹ Viereck, George Sylvester, *Spreading Germs of Hate*. New York: Horace Liveright, (1930), 167.

falsehood.⁶⁰ Propaganda policy founded in lies is unintelligent, immoral, and harms ourselves more than the enemy.⁶¹

WWII counterpropaganda ideology was based on the truth.⁶² US counterpropaganda specialized exclusively in truth, in sharp contrast to the enemy, concentrating on news as its principle ammunition.⁶³ OWI was required “to tell the truth” and the target audiences would form their own judgments and opinions.⁶⁴ The distinction between OWI’s overt propaganda, based on truth, and covert propaganda conducted by the OSS was clear.⁶⁵

President Truman established a “Campaign of Truth” as the foundational Cold War counterpropaganda policy.⁶⁶ A campaign of truthful information would refute communist lies, and deliver positive messages about the US and US policy.⁶⁷ Eisenhower separated the overt and covert propaganda campaigns to promote the truthful propaganda policy overtly, but reserve other techniques for covert use.⁶⁸

Summary

The historical case studies represent successful examples of counterpropaganda, but the context of past wars and political situations make parallel comparisons difficult and speculative. There is no solution from the past, no template or checklist to guarantee a future outcome for

⁶⁰ Mackenzie, 56-57.

⁶¹ Lumley, 430.

⁶² Shulman, 36.

⁶³ Margolin, 61-66.

⁶⁴ Steele, Richard W. *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, (1985), 172.

⁶⁵ Shulman, 32.

⁶⁶ Krugler, 96.

⁶⁷ *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*. Edited by Gary D. Rawnsley. New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., (1999), 32-33.

Parry-Giles, 13.

⁶⁸ Osgood, Kenneth. *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, (2006).

defeating adversary propaganda. History can guide and inform decisions and the historical case studies provided insight into guidelines for a new counterpropaganda strategy.



Chapter 4

Guidelines Applied to Current Situation

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

--Abraham Lincoln

Strategy is the art and science of ends, ways, and means. The *ends* refer to certain desired conditions derived from guidance or policy. The *ways* represent concepts and the framework for a theory of action. The *means* represent the mechanism, capabilities, or Instruments of Power (IoPs) to accomplish the strategy. *Why has US strategy failed to defeat al-Qaeda's propaganda?* The current strategy *ways* that compose the theory of action to defeat AQ propaganda are the root cause of the problem. AQ franchise organizations are recruiting as disparate groups across the globe while the mechanism to defeat AQ has a regional focus. Ultimately, the *ways* and *means* are not affecting the desired *ends*.¹

The National Security Strategy (NSS) guidance directs a global campaign to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda (AQ) and its affiliates in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and around the world.² The NSS refers to Afghanistan and Pakistan as the frontline of this fight against AQ.³ "Al-Qaeda's core in Pakistan remains the most dangerous component of the larger network, but we also face a growing threat from

¹ *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*. Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. United States Department of State Publication, April 2009. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/122599.pdf>, 9.

² *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. (May 2010), 19.

³ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. (May 2010), 4.

the group's allies worldwide. We must deny these groups the ability...to recruit..."⁴ The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) guidance stated, "We must continue to support local efforts to combat the extremist threat that emanates from places like Somalia, Yemen, and North Africa."⁵

The five guidelines from the historical case studies represent new *ways* for a strategy to defeat al-Qaeda recruiting, propaganda, and influence. The guidelines are all concepts that contribute to a theory of action to defeat AQ recruiting. First, an organization that represents the "I" in DIME as an instrument of power akin to the Department of Defense (DoD) as the "M", or Department of State (DoS) as the "D". Second, a unified policy that provides the unity of effort, command and control (C2), and cohesive operations on a global scale. Third, a disaggregation of AQ will enable tailored operations to diverse audiences to leverage unique characteristics of the AQ franchise organizations, their regional environments, and target audiences. Fourth, a cognitive approach to counterpropaganda exploits the decision-making apparatus of AQ's recruiting pool rather than the enemy infrastructure or information. The cognitive approach detaches counterpropaganda from the military operations in many respects. Finally, the strategy must have authenticity and be firmly seated in the principle of truth. This chapter answers one fundamental question. What transfer value emerges from past strategies within historical case studies to guide new strategic ways to defeat AQ franchise organizations recruiting effectiveness?

⁴ *The National Security Strategy*, 20.

⁵ Mullen, Michael G. *Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Guidance for 2011*. January 5, 2011. http://www.jcs.mil/content/files/2011-01/011011165132_CJCS_Annual_Guidance_2011.pdf.

Organization

The US established a civilian-led organization to conduct counterpropaganda in WWI, WWII, and the Cold War, but there is no equivalent agency to conduct counterpropaganda against al-Qaeda today. Establishing an organization, as a concept for a new counterpropaganda strategy, creates a tangible information instrument of power (IoP) with unity of command, consolidated capabilities, and accountability. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Strategic Communications (SC) Execution Roadmap called for shared responsibility for SC across all departments and agencies in the USG.⁶ The review recognized several problems applying the information IoP and effectively integrating agencies, programs, and capabilities within a complex and evolving environment.

Several disparate organizations conduct counterpropaganda in a myriad of uncoordinated methods in support of the Military or Diplomatic IoPs.⁷ Across the USG, all departments and agencies are struggling to adapt their anachronistic programs and policies to acclimate to globally-diffuse terrorist networks and transnational activities.⁸ Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recognized the strategic emphasis on countering violent extremism through SC and IO, but also understood the organizational problems associated with these capabilities in the DoD. A recent assessment of SC/IO called for an IO realignment of responsibility within the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)). “This realignment of responsibility provides a single entry point for all components of the Department and our interagency partners. This realignment also assigns a single point of fiscal and

⁶ *QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication 2006*, September 25, 2006.

⁷ Theohary, Catherine A., and John Rollins. *Terrorist Use of the Internet: Information Operations in Cyberspace*. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress R41674, March 8, 2011. <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/158490.pdf>

⁸ Gates, Robert M. Secretary of Defense. Strategic Communication and Information Operations in the DoD. Memorandum January 25, 2011.

program accountability; establishes a clear linkage among policies, capabilities, and programs; and provides for better integration with traditional strategy and planning functions.”⁹ Similarly, SC responsibilities are shared between USD(P) and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD(PA)). “By designating co-leads, I expect that policy-making and communications planning will be better integrated, with each improved by being informed by expert advice from the other.”¹⁰ The realignment suggests an organizational change was necessary to rejuvenate the SC and IO efforts against AQ, and perhaps an organizational change within DoD would improve coordination, integration, leadership, strategy and planning.

The Department of State (DoS) also uses information to counter violent extremism through communications with global publics and potential extremists through the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications. “In order to ensure consistent, coordinated, and coherent US messaging to reduce radicalization and participation in extremist violence, the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications will coordinate, orient, and inform whole-of-government communications activities targeted against violent extremism to audiences abroad.”¹¹

RAND conducted a survey of Strategic Communications (SC) and Public Diplomacy (PD) studies written since September 11, 2001 in response to the abundant criticisms to understand the commonalities and recommendations for improvements.¹² The survey concluded that about half of the studies recommended the need for leadership and coordinating authority across the multitude of departments and

⁹ Gates.

¹⁰ Gates.

¹¹ Department of State. Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review 2010. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153142.pdf>

¹² Paul, Christopher. *Whither Strategic Communication? A Survey of Current Proposals and Recommendations*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, (2009), iii.

agencies.¹³ Less than one quarter of the studies recommended a new government agency or reestablishment of USIA, but more than half recommended a new supporting organization that was non-profit and non-governmental in nature.¹⁴

The organization must represent the information IoP and integrate across all other IoPs without being subordinate to those agencies. The DoD uses SC and IO to enhance military strategy, military objectives, military lines of operation, and military end states. The current strategy to defeat AQ propaganda focuses on AQ core elements and integrates into the greater Afghanistan/Pakistan COIN operation to defeat the Taliban. The DoD organizational structure for SC and IO strategy leverages support for the military IoP. “The DoD’s strategic communication processes support major military operations, shape the environment to prevent conflict, and if conflict occurs, ensure it occurs on terms favorable to the realization of US national security interests.”¹⁵ Who conducts counterpropaganda to defeat AQ recruiting? Geographic Combatant Commanders conduct operations to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat AQ and their affiliates.¹⁶ The DoS conducts whole-of-government communications activities to counter violent extremism to audiences abroad in conjunction and coordination with the Bureau of Counterterrorism, DoD, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies responsible for information programs related to counterterrorism.¹⁷ One organization that represents information IoP can disassociate from diplomatic or military IoPs as well as integrate within their strategies. An information organization can operate globally to defeat AQ regional efforts in Afghanistan/Pakistan in support of military operations, and simultaneously in North Africa or

¹³ Paul, 4.

¹⁴ Paul, 9-10.

¹⁵ Gates.

¹⁶ *The National Security Strategy*, 19.

¹⁷ Department of State. Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review

even within the domestic US. This organization would consolidate capabilities, develop and lead the strategy, and conduct the integrated planning, execution, and assessment to defeat AQ global recruiting. This proposed organization would conduct AQ counterpropaganda.

Unified Policy for Counterpropaganda

Conducting effective counterpropaganda requires the USG develop, and adhere to, a unified policy. A unified policy connotes cohesion and unity of effort across all government entities that are involved in propaganda operations and influence efforts. The policy should identify objectives and strategy to clarify audiences, end states, and funding in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of the policy beyond political rhetoric. “We must align our actions with our words. We must be more effective in deliberate communication to convey credible and consistent messages.”¹⁸

The counterpropaganda campaign failure in Iraq is one example that illustrates the criticality of having a unified policy. “In Iraq, competing organizations located in different headquarters and combatant commands and answering to different departments and agencies in the USG each have a finger in the information operations pie. These organizations often fail to coordinate. In some cases, separate groups answering to various organizations and commands within DoD and DoS each sought to contract the same firms, resulting in duplication of effort and waste. Often, these competing organizations would also saturate the

¹⁸ *The National Security Strategy*, 16.

airwaves and print media but confuse the Iraqi audience with conflicting messages and ever-changing themes.”¹⁹

The guidance in the National Security Strategy recognizes the importance of information as an IoP and the challenges associated with a globally disbursed adversary that leverages Internet technology to recruit and influence. The guidance identifies the end state, “To disrupt, dismantle, and defeat AQ and their affiliates,” but does not provide the unifying policy that establishes the *ways*.²⁰ A RAND survey indicated that one-third of SC studies since 9/11 recommended a clearly defined overall strategy, “without a clear strategy, the leaders of each department, agency, and office are left to decide what is important.”²¹ The guidance in the NSS informs a DoD strategy to defeat AQ, and part of that strategy may include counterpropaganda efforts. The guidance in the NSS informs a DoS strategy to defeat AQ, and part of that strategy may include counterpropaganda efforts that could complement or oppose the DoD effort.

Consider the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) counterpropaganda efforts in Afghanistan/Pakistan to defeat AQ core element recruiting and influence as one strategy. This counterpropaganda effort is DoD led and clearly represents a military-centric strategy characterized by a regional focus and aggregation of AQ core with the Taliban regime.²² The counterpropaganda mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan is vital to the war, but admittedly one the US is losing.²³ The new counterpropaganda mission targets the Taliban’s capability to influence and recruit the local populations using

¹⁹ Garfield, Andrew. “The US Counter-propaganda Failure in Iraq.” *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2007: 23-32. <http://www.meforum.org/1753/the-us-counter-propaganda-failure-in-iraq>

²⁰ *The National Security Strategy*, 19.

²¹ Paul, 8.

²² *The National Military Strategy*, 5.

²³ Shanker, Thom. “US Plans a Mission Against Taliban’s Propaganda.” *The New York Times*, August 16, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/16/world/asia/16policy.html>. Last accessed January 23, 2011.

communications access techniques in remote areas where Taliban thrive.²⁴ This strategy supports regional military objectives, but neglects the recruiting and influence of AQ core and disparate franchise organizations outside the region, yet consumes capability, resources, and planning to shape the counterpropaganda effort. In contrast to OEF missions in Afghanistan/Pakistan, OEF Trans Sahara (TS) in US AFRICOM employs a different strategy in concert with DoS, USAID, and the Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP).²⁵ The counterpropaganda strategy in the Trans Sahara region is comprised of multiple USG agencies and partnership nations such as DoS, DoD, USAID, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal.²⁶ The TSCTP strategy to combat the spread of AQ ideology is through partnership capacity, public diplomacy, information programs, humanitarian assistance, and infrastructure development in the region.²⁷

A unified policy for counterpropaganda facilitates positive relationships between governmental departments and identifies guidelines to ensure that deeds match words. A unified policy facilitates unity of effort, a prerequisite for a successful influence campaign. Until there is a unified policy for counterpropaganda, the USG will conduct a myriad of operations disguised as strategies to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat AQ that will fail to achieve the end state. There are many *ways* to defeat AQ's recruiting and influence, but the unified policy accounts for military power and other instruments of statecraft applied in concert. A unified counterpropaganda policy applies pressure on AQ within a global

²⁴ Shanker.

²⁵ US Africa Command. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. <http://www.africom.mil/tsctp.asp>. Last accessed April 22, 2011.

²⁶ US Africa Command. Operation Enduring Freedom Trans Sahara. <http://www.africom.mil/oef-ts.asp>. Last accessed April 22, 2011.

²⁷ US Africa Command. Operation Enduring Freedom Trans Sahara.

context, but incorporates regional contextual factors to exploit local conditions, grievances, and populations.

Disaggregation of the Target Audience

A counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ recruiting increases in complexity and scope if the US labels every potential terrorist, insurgent, and non-state actor as “al-Qaeda.”²⁸ The first element of understanding the problem is to recognize the label AQ gives legitimacy to individuals, organizations, affiliates, associates, and wannabes across the globe. “Not only should AQ and its leaders be named less often by American officials, but the label of AQ should not be used to describe what are, in truth, diverse and splintered militant Islamist movements, organizations, and networks.”²⁹ Segregating and separating the audiences can create and exacerbate wedges between the actors and possibly disrupt the appearance of unity and coherence of the AQ organization.³⁰ The counterpropaganda strategy must disaggregate AQ and the target audience and apply the label “AQ” sparingly.

The US needs to “disaggregate and distinguish between enemies.”³¹ According to Kilcullen, the primary reason to disaggregate the enemy was to shed the regrettable *War on Terror* categorization. “Lumping together all terrorist or extremist groups and all insurgent or militia organizations under the undifferentiated concept of a War on Terrorism makes an already difficult challenge substantially harder than it needs to be...”³²

²⁸ Geltzer, Joshua Alexander. *US Counter-Terrorism Strategy and al-Qaeda: Signalling and the Terrorist World-View*. London, UK: Routledge, (2010), 145.

²⁹ Geltzer, 145-146.

³⁰ Geltzer, 146.

³¹ Kilcullen, David. *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, (2009), 284-285.

³² Kilcullen, 285.

During the Bush administration, the counterpropaganda strategy attempted to segregate AQ as an audience into two different groups: those populations already engaged in AQ activity and those on the brink of involvement.³³ The counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ ultimately failed to distinguish between the two populations. The strategy acknowledged the distinction between the populations, but failed to adopt policies attuned to it; attempts to cope with the distinct audiences fell short; and there was a sincere belief that the populations, while distinguishable, would respond in desired ways to the same signals and counterpropaganda.³⁴ Disaggregating the target audience involves more than distinguishing between those who are currently AQ and those on the brink of involvement. “The Bush administration misunderstood AQ as an adversary and the global audience towards which that adversary’s strategy is designed, and for which both AQ and America are competing. Washington’s signals stressed force and power, resolve and relentlessness, and while those types of signals undoubtedly carry significant weight for certain ruling regimes, they do little to impress the global audience to which AQ seeks to appeal.”³⁵

The first step is to disaggregate the Taliban counterinsurgency effort with the counterterrorism effort against AQ core element in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. The counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ core’s ability to recruit and motivate is incongruent with a Taliban counterinsurgency because the Taliban are not the target audience for AQ propaganda.³⁶ The propaganda value of AQ core, the Takfiri element, remains symbolic of the ideological movement to motivate and influence recruits globally. The resources, manpower, planning, and blood spent on any strategy to usurp the Taliban is lost on defeating AQ.

³³ Geltzer, 20-21.

³⁴ Geltzer, 20-21.

³⁵ Geltzer, 134.

³⁶ *The National Military Strategy*, 5.

RAND's strategic influence and terrorism study concluded that influence campaigns are highly sensitive to contextual and cultural factors within operational environments.³⁷ The proposed solution, according to RAND, is to match operational objectives, message, and delivery to the audience. This guideline recommends disaggregation of the target audience and requires a thorough understanding of the target population's demographics and psychographics.³⁸ The Muslim world represents substantially diverse societies and cultures, therefore a counterpropaganda strategy must account for multiple discreet societies rather than an overall strategy campaign for the Muslim world.³⁹ RAND proposes three guiding principles. First, the influence campaign objectives must match the target audience through an understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and emotions of target populations.⁴⁰ Second, the influence campaign must incorporate feedback mechanisms in order to adjust policies when necessary to maintain advantages.⁴¹ Finally, the influence campaign must have realistic expectations of success.⁴²

The DoS recommended using counterpropaganda to disaggregate AQ in the 2006 Country Report on Terrorism.⁴³ "To the extent that AQ succeeds in aggregating this broader constellation of extremist actors, it can begin to pursue more frequent and geographically extensive terror attacks."⁴⁴ Disaggregation breaks the ability of AQ to exploit ordinary people's grievances and influence or motivate them into becoming terrorists. "Disaggregation denies AQ its primary objective of achieving

³⁷ Cragin, Kim and Scott Gerwehr. *Dissuading Terror: Strategic Influence and the Struggle Against Terrorism*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, (2005), x.

³⁸ Cragin, Kim and Scott Gerwehr, x.

³⁹ Cragin, Kim and Scott Gerwehr, 41.

⁴⁰ Cragin, Kim and Scott Gerwehr, 62.

⁴¹ Cragin, Kim and Scott Gerwehr, 62.

⁴² Cragin, Kim and Scott Gerwehr, 62.

⁴³ *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*. Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. United States Department of State Publication, April 2007. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82727.htm>

⁴⁴ *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*.

leadership over extremist movements worldwide and unifying them into a single movement.”⁴⁵

“As al-Qaeda’s external communications capacity continues to degrade, the center of gravity in fighting al-Qaeda will shift to niche habitats where the organization’s narrative survives and thrives. In each case—from Somalia to the FATA to European and US communities—understanding the local information environment and how it intersects with global information flows will be necessary to fashion effective strategies for abetting the further decline of jihadist propaganda efforts.”⁴⁶ The National Military Strategy (NMS) recognizes the global dispersion of AQ and threat of violent extremism. “Groups such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Shabaab, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, and others emanate from Somalia, Yemen, and elsewhere around the globe.”⁴⁷ The NMS also recognizes the long-term strategy must discredit and defeat the ideology within those populations.⁴⁸

Disaggregating the target audience requires a counterpropaganda strategy that recognizes the uniqueness of the franchise organizations and the contextual factors of the region, sources of influence, and factors that affect the recruiting base in that specific region.⁴⁹ The disaggregation and fragmentation of AQ provides a global sight picture for counterpropaganda efforts yet contests the perceptions of unity that AQ seeks. A counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ recruiting cannot combine Taliban influence strategy and effort with AQ core element

⁴⁵ *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*.

⁴⁶ Kimmage, Daniel. “Al-Qaeda Central and the Internet.” Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper, *New America Foundation*, March 2009.

⁴⁷ *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*. (8 February 2011), 6.

⁴⁸ *The National Military Strategy*, 6.

⁴⁹ *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*. Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. United States Department of State Publication, August 2010. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/141114.pdf>, 9.

strategy because they are incompatible recruiting bases. Furthermore, AQ core element strategy must be disaggregated from AQAP and AQIM. The target audience of AQ core influence and motivation may be US domestic audiences through mass media messaging and mainstream Internet news reporting.⁵⁰ Countering the recruiting of AQAP and AQIM requires individual strategies to account for regional, cultural, demographic, technological contextual factors that characterize the recruiting bases in their respective regions.⁵¹ The US counterpropaganda strategy will need to tailor the specific components of the policy to ensure they are relevant to extant and emerging patterns of local and regional terrorism.⁵² One sized counterpropaganda strategy does not fit all situations and must account for local conditions.⁵³

Cognitive Approach

Counterpropaganda strategies rely on three components of the information environment for influence operations, physical infrastructure, content, and cognition.⁵⁴ The counterpropaganda strategies leveraging the physical infrastructure and content environments are often associated with military uses of force, albeit kinetic or non-kinetic in nature. These actions link the

⁵⁰ Blair, Dennis C., Director of National Intelligence. Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, (February 2, 2010), 8.

⁵¹ *Future of US Public Diplomacy*. Testimony of Judith A. McHale, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Before the SFRC Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy, and Global Women's Issues. Washington DC, March 10, 2010.

⁵² Rabasa, Angel, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Sara A. Daly, Heather S. Gregg, Theodore W. Karasik, Kevin A. O'Brien, William Rosenau. *Beyond al-Qaeda Part I: The Global Jihadist Movement*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006. http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2006/rand_mg429.pdf Last accessed 31 March 2011.

⁵³ *Radicalization and US Muslims*. Interview of Mark Fallon, Senior Vice-President at the Soufan Group, former Special Agent for Naval Criminal Investigative Service by Jonathan Masters. Council on Foreign Relations, (March 11, 2011) summary xxiii.

⁵⁴ Lachow, Irving, "Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?" Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*. Edited by Franklin D. Kramer, Stuart H. Starr, and Larry K. Wentz. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, (2009), 459-461.

counterpropaganda effort with military operations against the enemy.⁵⁵ The US counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ characterized by the use of force, failed to dissuade potential recruits drawn to AQ, and did little to threaten those eager for martyrdom, and validated AQ propaganda claims that US willingly used military force on Muslim civilians.⁵⁶ Offensive military actions projected a counter-productive message given the world-view of those drawn to AQ, representing a global campaign against Islam and against Muslims.⁵⁷ The NMS states “Undeterred by the complexity of terrorist networks and in concert with our Allies and partners, we will be prepared to find, capture, or kill violent extremists wherever they reside when they threaten interests and citizens of America and our allies.”⁵⁸ The counterpropaganda strategies that manipulate the physical infrastructure and content are generally enemy-centric. The strategy is targeting the enemy’s ability to communicate, the enemy message, or the enemies behavior. The cognitive approach focuses on the recruiting base, the local populations, and the conditions to change behaviors, attitudes, and influence a population’s way of thinking. The cognitive-based counterpropaganda strategy uses innovative approaches to mitigate the social and economic factors that amplify the appeal of AQ’s radical ideology.⁵⁹

The Takfiri ideology will continue to appeal to a core constituency, even as it fails as a mass movement, and the cognitive approach will not eliminate the core constituency.⁶⁰ An AFRICOM initiative that exemplifies the cognitive approach as a counterpropaganda strategy

⁵⁵ Lachow, Irving, “Cyberterrorism: Menace or Myth?” Chapter 19 in *Cyberpower and National Security*, 459.

⁵⁶ Geltzer, 132.

⁵⁷ Geltzer, 105.

⁵⁸ *The National Military Strategy*, 6.

⁵⁹ *Preventing Terrorism: Strategies and Policies to Prevent and Combat Transnational Threats*. Remarks by Anne Witkowsky, US Deputy Coordinator for Homeland Security and Multilateral Affairs. Organization For Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, October 14, 2010.

⁶⁰ Kimmage, 16.

emphasizes regional outreach efforts in the Sahel and Maghreb regions, Nigeria, and Senegal to develop regional programming that embraces the vast and diverse region. “The emphasis is on preserving the traditional tolerance and moderation displayed in most African Muslim communities and countering the development of extremism, particularly in youth and rural populations.”⁶¹

“The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 included measures to promote free media in Islamic countries, scholarships for Muslims to attend US-sponsored schools, public diplomacy training in DoS, and establishing an International Youth Opportunity Fund within United Nations Educational, Science, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).”⁶² The International Youth Opportunity Fund contribute to education and literacy that lead to economic opportunity and freedom; therefore better textbooks that do not teach racism or hatred to Arab and Muslim children, and offering a choice of schools other than extremist madrassas are among the steps that may be key to eliminating Islamist terrorism.⁶³ There are many examples of the *means* to accomplish a cognitive approach to counterpropaganda. Using Internet, radio, television, and video products are all powerful tools to distribute information to at-risk populations.⁶⁴

The long-term counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ recruiting must leverage a cognitive-based approach directed at the at risk populations to change, influence, and shape perceptions that exclude radicalism towards the US. The cognitive-based approach emphasizes

⁶¹ US Africa Command. Operation Enduring Freedom Trans Sahara.

⁶² US Congressional Research Service. US Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations (RL32607; May 1, 2006), by Susan B. Epstein, Specialist in Foreign Policy and Trade Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, 2.

⁶³ US Congressional Research Service. US Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations, 11.

⁶⁴ *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007*. Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. United States Department of State Publication, April 30, 2008. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82727.htm>

local conditions, situational factors, and regional grievances that attract recruits to AQ propaganda. The military approaches that target AQ infrastructure, propaganda products, jihadi websites, and media are enemy-centric and remain short-term reactions in concert with military operations. These approaches were intended to send a message to AQ, through the use of force, and the counterpropaganda strategy reinforced that message.⁶⁵

Authenticity

The counterpropaganda strategy must be authentic and rooted in truth. The 2006 QDR Strategic Communications Execution Roadmap highlighted the criticality of authentic communications. “Effective communication by the US must build upon coordinated actions and information at all levels of the USG to maintain credibility and trust. This will be accomplished through an emphasis on accuracy, consistency, veracity, timeliness, and transparency in words and deeds. Such credibility is essential to building relationships that advance our national interests.”⁶⁶ The 9/11 Commission suggests a dialog is required to reach deeper understanding between societies and to build long term relationships between governments and their societies. “If we don’t have long-term relationships with Muslim populations, we cannot have trust. Without trust, public diplomacy is ineffective.”⁶⁷

The counterpropaganda strategy is only effective if the message is credible. When the message is not consistent with what people see or experience independently, the strategy is ineffective. The counterpropaganda strategy must, in part, “clearly and truthfully explain

⁶⁵ Geltzer, 47.

⁶⁶ *QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication 2006*, (September 25, 2006), 2.

⁶⁷ US Congressional Research Service. *US Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations*, 10.

US foreign policy actions, rather than appearing indifferent to world opinion.”⁶⁸ Edward R. Murrow (USIA Director, 1961-1964) said in 1963 before a House Subcommittee: “American traditions and the American ethic require us to be truthful...truth is the best propaganda and lies are the worst. To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful. It is as simple as that.”⁶⁹ The Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) is a recent example of the importance of credibility and authenticity. The Secretary of Defense disestablished OSI shortly after their questionable credibility made them ineffective.⁷⁰



⁶⁸ US Congressional Research Service. US Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations, 13.

⁶⁹ US Congressional Research Service. US Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations, 13.

⁷⁰ US Congressional Research Service. Terrorist Use of the Internet: Information Operations in Cyberspace (R41674; Mar. 8, 2011), 10.

Conclusion

The central question of this work is—why has US strategy failed to defeat al-Qaeda’s propaganda? There are historical case studies that represent successful examples of counterpropaganda, but the context of past wars and differing political situations make parallel comparisons difficult and speculative. There is no solution from the past, no template or checklist to guarantee a future outcome for defeating adversary propaganda. History can guide and inform decisions and the historical case studies provided insight into guidelines for a new counterpropaganda strategy. Approaching the concept of strategy as ends, ways, and means, the five guidelines distilled from historical case studies in WWI, WWII, and the Cold War shaped a new *way* for counterpropaganda strategy and a theory of action to defeat AQ’s ability to recruit and motivate followers across the globe.

First, the US is not organized in such a manner to conduct or lead the counterpropaganda strategy required to defeat AQ recruiting over the long-term. The US counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ is a loose collaboration of *means* across various IoPs and dominated by the military IoP. The USG needs an organization that represents the information IoP among the other IoPs to lead, direct, plan, and have accountability for a US counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ. Historically, the US has treated counterpropaganda as critically important to the overall campaign strategy and assigned responsibility to a singular organization such as CPI, OWI, or USIA. Today, no such organization exists and the counterpropaganda strategy has performed abysmally against AQ since 9/11.

Second, there must be a unified policy to guide the counterpropaganda strategy and ideally, to match words and deeds.

Without an organization to formulate and direct the unified policy, there exists a myriad of disparate capabilities, agencies, strategies, and planning for counterpropaganda against AQ. One counterpropaganda strategy in Afghanistan/Pakistan may have repercussions in North Africa, Europe, or in the US. A unified policy standardizes the counterpropaganda methodology while integrating effects across all of the IoPs and geographic regions while maintaining awareness and providing a clearinghouse for assessment. One unifying policy for counterpropaganda strategy is essential to matching words and deeds through unity of effort. Historically, the concept of a unified policy for counterpropaganda has decreased over time. Control over the domestic and foreign agenda and separating white and black propaganda have been the indicators of this phenomenon.

Third, the counterpropaganda strategy to defeat AQ recruiting must disaggregate the AQ organization to affect at-risk populations for AQ recruitment and not the populations already committed to AQ. The case studies provided strong evidence for disaggregating the target audiences as domestic, foreign, neutral, enemy, recently liberated, and our own military forces to tailor the messages for the audience and contextual factors. The counterpropaganda strategy against AQ requires disaggregation from the Taliban altogether, then between AQ core elements and AQ franchise organizations such as AQAP and AQIM to address the audiences and populations susceptible to AQ recruiting within local contexts and conditions.

Fourth, a cognitive approach is the long-term counterpropaganda solution to defeat AQ ideology. The militarized approach to counterpropaganda remains focused on affecting the information content, such as jihadist websites, or the propaganda infrastructure such as web servers in support of military objectives. The militarized approach is also enemy-centric and intended more for al-Qaeda rather

than the audience that al-Qaeda seeks to recruit. The cognitive approach to counterpropaganda seeks to influence the audiences that are susceptible to AQ recruiting in areas outside of the military conflict zone. A cognitive approach is a process of changing attitudes and conditions over longer timelines that are not necessarily conducive to military measures of performance.

Finally, the counterpropaganda strategy must be authentic and based on the truth. The counterpropaganda strategy must have credibility and the information disseminated must be authentic and truthful among the intended audiences. Any information intended to deceive the audiences would usurp the entire strategy, since long-term credibility is a pillar propping up the counterpropaganda itself. Authenticity is extremely difficult to convey to all audiences because perceptions are difficult to manage.

Osama bin Laden, the lead Takfiri element of AQ core is dead. The window of opportunity to capitalize on this momentum with a counterpropaganda strategy is closing. The USG faces a fiscally constrained environment and future that is forcing tough policy decisions. How important is this counterpropaganda strategy to a long-term, global counterterrorism strategy? The US must eliminate the Takfiri element of AQ core, but the recruiting base of AQ...the global youth that are attracted to this lifestyle, must be *influenced*. A regional approach to counterpropaganda will focus on the conditions and context that resonate with the local population. The counterpropaganda strategy seeks to prevent Takfiri extremism and recruiting to AQ franchise elements over the long-term.

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